

STARBURST

QUEST FOR FIRE

REVIEW, PLUS INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

WE PRESENT REVIEWS OF

ROAD GAMES

BLOODY MOON

I SPIT ON
YOUR GRAVE

RETROSPECTIVE ON

WITCHFINDER
GENERAL

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
JAMIE LEE CURTIS



QUEST FOR FIRE

WE INTERVIEW JEAN-JACQUES ANNAUD, DIRECTOR OF THE SUPERIOR PREHISTORIC PICTURE QUEST FOR FIRE, BEGINNING OF PAGE 28. A FULL REVIEW CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 26.

THE FILMS OF WILLIAM CASTLE



THE FINAL PART OF OUR OVERVIEW OF THE CAREER OF PRODUCER WILLIAM CASTLE CONCENTRATES ON HIS LAST MOVIE, BUG. SEE PAGE 34.

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STARBURST LETTERS

THE RUSH

The House by the Lake (Death Weekend), a smashing horror thriller from Canada has been categorized "shoddy pornography" and described by one critic as "effective" in an "honorable 89 minutes". My question is: Do you choose to believe Leslie Helliwell or Stephen H. Schuer, the editor of *Movies on TV*. The facts urge one to ask: With such differences in opinion, just what is the purpose of film critics?

As is true with the criticism of a film, there is no definitive response.

Since saying Yes to a film or No has spoiled out of vogue, surely there is another way to go about writing on the cinema. Pauline Kael, in her review of *Blow Out* in *The New Yorker*, takes us back into the cinema, opens the curtain, and invites us to experience it again. John Brosnan, in his review of *Blow Out*, delivers a No verdict with a shade of Yes, rather reluctantly. He demonstrates that he has seen enough films to pick a homage, and he wisely cracks about a film-maker who is perhaps the finest artist in cinema today. I am not here to put down Brian De Palma as most of you Englishmen seem to do along with David Cronenberg, George Romero and Gary Sherman, all Americans. What have you got against them? Hop off your pedestals and look around. What was the last good horror film to blow out of England? Well, there was *The Legacy*, but that was very ho-hum really, wasn't it?

Okay, you have liked some of Cronenberg's work, and you do like John Carpenter, but Brian De Palma is continually jabbed in the ribs, always predictably, each time his name appears in your magazine. All his films receive either a No or an impolite Yes; that floors me and you are all forgetting some very important things.

Critics choose to review a movie by concentrating on its entertainment value, or they concentrate on its technical accomplishments, the strength of the narrative, the quality of the acting.

In every review of *Star Wars*, not one critic spoke of the feelings that first scene of the Imperial Star Destroyer roaring over the camera gave them. For me, and for many others, the feeling is a familiar one: It can best be described as a Rush. Your spine tingles, your body pulses, your hair feels electric all of a sudden. Keeping this sensation in

mind, let me return you to Brian De Palma and just two of his films, *The Fury* and *Blow Out*. Let me now ask you one question, an important one: Is not the purpose of a film to entertain and generate an emotional, physical or mental reaction? If your reply is: No, it's something that exists to be poked at, examined with a magnifying glass, and when you find the holes, or the repeated patterns, you identify and splash them with dye; a film is like a pullover, and a viewer is like a supervisor in a clothing factory. He takes that jumper and seerches for flews, never realizing it can be worn and enjoyed anyway, you need not read on, but if you're reading *Starburst*, you may proceed and agree with me.

When a Rush is generated, it comes as no surprise: it seemed inevitable, gleefully so. A filmic rush is composed of music, fluid photography, correct lighting, and a huge whollop of emotion. A rush can be interpreted as a cathartic response, but it runs deeper than that. To experience a Rush may be

comically called a Cinematic Orgasm—the climax is the cathartic release. This may seem awfully postured and self-indulgent, but writing about what critics have failed to nail will have unexpected results. Please bear with me.

Brian De Palma is a Rush master. He knows how to generate a sensation. He is aware of the elements necessary for the response.

The Fury socks us with one dynamic rush that is far too successful to verbalise. To establish the scene, I will quote it from the soundtrack as "Gillian's Escape" from the Paragon Institute. After successfully fleeing out the front door, pursued by hester (Carrie Snodgrass), Gillian (Amy Irving in soft nightdress) escapes into the street and runs in slow motion toward an uncertain destination. The soundtrack (John Williams' best) unwinds the scene like a knotted tornado and instills in the tracking movement an amazing balance of energy and wonderment. Hester, trailing Gillian, runs quickly, while a sleek limousine glides along behind her, the driver watching

closely. As the "Fury" motif pierces the soundtrack, a fellow sporting a gun releases a bullet which whizzes past Gillian and strikes the driver of the limousine. All this unfolds in glorious slow-motion. The car curls out of control and meets Hester, throwing her high into the air and down through the windscreen. The tone of the scene is one of energetic abandonment. Camera still tracking, Gillian is confronted by Kirk Douglas. She narrowly avoids a stray bullet. Douglas pumps several into a jogger and Gillian stands on the spot and circles the ground beneath her feet, throwing her hands to her temples in a Rush scene that will later be duplicated by Nancy Allen in *Dressed to Kill*. The jogger executes a solid dive and Douglas embraces Irving, the music slowly fading. The Rush has been constant for ninety seconds; the relief is powerful as hell. Cinema has been stretched to an extreme, and the result is magical. *The Fury* is solid, poetic cinema surrounded by a wreath of sensational violence, beautiful murder, evil and righteous



Top: Andrew Stevens looks pensive in a rush from *The Fury* a film too dynamic to verbalise. Right: John Travolta conducts a web of terror in *Blow Out*. The rush is permanently fixated on one act of violence, the moment of ultimate power.

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people. It is a Rush—that described being the most intense, the most physically satisfying—from start to finish.

As John Travolta (in his most mature, refreshing role yet) stands alone on a bridge at night, the audience is invited to listen to the nocturnal sounds around him. A frog croaks and an iguana, or perhaps a lizard, slithers into the river which flows smoothly under the bridge. An owl turns into the eye of the camera and hoots. Rush. It did not simply turn. It executed a sharp, exact, circular movement. It glints at the camera and suddenly turns away. A car approaches and the focus is pulled away from the owl. Travolta, microphone in hand, guides it toward the approaching roar of engines, the sticky screech of tyres. Preceded by a sound that will become the pivotal element of the story, the vehicle dives off the bridge into the murk below. In flashback, Travolta re-examines his recording and acknowledges an explosion, perhaps the sound of a bullet. De Palma initiates a tight

close-up of the car in motion, only the tyre, rolling gently, filling the frame. In a split second a bullet strikes the tyre and it blows. The Rush is permanently fixated on the act of violence, the moment of power.

An effective method of reviewing a film is to seek the Rush and judge the singular scenes on the intensity of that Rush, thereby discovering that as an audience mover, the film is successful.

Brian De Palma is a masterful film-maker who obviously loves his craft. He revels in style and technique; he aims to quench the emotions. His films are something to see, live and experience.

Dead and Buried's opener provides the viewer with an intense set of messages that grow to a Rush result. The postcard commencement of the film, music growing, symbolizes that here is a story that has no end and no proper beginning. Note that the film ends on a freeze-frame. The film springs to life as the postcard is extended into the proceeding frame. Creating

life is as simple as that? Maybe.

A photographer captures sea life and the wide expanses of the beach, complacently, until a young woman urges him to photograph her. He complies. The shutter opens and closes. He stops her in the frame. She disrobes. Again the camera clicks away hungrily. It drinks in this woman. It penetrates her.

Click. The photographer is bludgeoned. He doubles over. Click. Slams onto the sand. Several men work carefully on him, breaking ribs, beating his face, striking his head. Clickety-click. Rush. It grows gradually and ices the spine with anticipation. The victim is hoisted against an old post projecting from the ocean bed. Click. He's gagged. Struck again. Petrol is distributed over his body. Click. Set alight, he screams. The violence generates a gut-level response that climaxes in a short, powerful rush. **Dead and Buried** is a film that succeeds beautifully in every way. It's wretched. It's tight. It's gruesome. It generates a response.

As a young hood (Tom Savini) is flung from a motorbike by a hungry ghoul, he draws a machete and kicks the creature to the ground. Snatching the hair of the ghoul to steady the head, the hood smiles "Say goodbye, creep" and plants the weapon in the soft skull of the creature. Cut. The Rush is over. Complete. In **Dawn of the Dead**, George Romero masters the rush response. It extends beyond mere butchery. It is a surrealistic release of pure aggression, set against a chaotic backdrop of random violence and stupendous buffoonery.

When critics start to examine the emotional responses of audiences who experience the ultimate cinematic high in these dark arenas of entertainment, they will have a definite purpose.

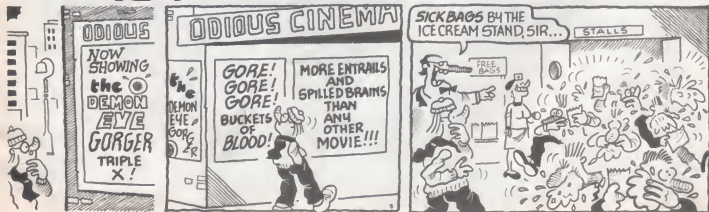
The selection of Rushes would certainly stir many people, I am certain. I urge anybody to respond who has had the pleasure...

Mark Savage,
 Melbourne,
 Australia.



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FLICKERS BY TIM QUINN & DICKY HOWETT



THINGS TO COME

BRAINSTORMING AHEAD

Although we may never be allowed to see the result, **Brainstorm** started re-shooting in Hollywood on February 8—just 71 days after the tragic death of leading lady Natalie Wood. Since her fatal sea accident off Catalina Island in November, the fantasy movie was shelved while director Douglas Trumbull worked out how to finish the film without her—and, what's more to the point, how to persuade MGM to let him do just that.

Apparently, MGM just wanted to cancel the project, collect the insurance money (15 million dollars) from Lloyds of London and be done with it. Trumbull, however, had been waiting several years to make this movie, his second only as a director since *Silent Running* in 1972, and knew he could solve the



problem of his missing star. He asked to be allowed to finish the job. And without doubles, despite what you may have read about him using Natalie's starletty sister, Lana Wood (aka Plenty O'Toole in Sean Connery's last Bond movie, *Diamonds Are Forever*).

"I'll defy any professional or any moviegoer to detect where Natalie Wood is missing in this film once it's completed," says Trumbull. "We had shot the beginning, middle and end. The major climax was completed. All of the elements of Natalie's role that really delineated her character, her relationship with (her screen husband) Christopher Walken, are in the can."

It's a confident statement and I don't like to disbelieve him, but surely if that was the case, MGM would not have been bitching for the insurance money in the first place... Doug Trumbull goes further in fact and as honest as he is, what else would one expect him to say

HALLOWEEN III

Well, *Halloween II* was not all it might have been. Or would have been in John Carpenter had directed and not merely produced it. Or if for that matter, his first choice of director, Tommy Lee Wallace, had handled it. I have higher hopes therefore, for—yes it had to happen—*Halloween III*. Not only is Tommy Wallace directing (he was John's art director on the original, plus *Assault on Precinct 13* and *The Fog*). But the scenario, which brings the Halloween night happenings up to computerology date, is being written by... Nigel Kneale!

Indeed the only off-putting news about the III exercise is its executive producer, Dino de Laurentiis... That's far from good news. Unless John and Debra Hill, as the line producers, have a way of keeping Dino in line. Or just out of the sound-stage.

QUICK TAKES

Some odd guests popping into the current season of *Mork and Mindy*: John Houseman from *The Fog*, tennis star Tracy Austin and, plugging *Star Trek II* no doubt, William Shatner... Peter O'Donnell's female Bond creation, *Modesty Blaise*, is the latest strip-star to be turned (churned?) into a television in the United States. I bet Willie Garvin won't be Cockney anymore... Karen Allen, the *Raiders* raver, is Arthur Penn's choice for his Broadway production of *Monday After The Miracle*, the sequel to *The Miracle Worker*... Unlike *Silent Running* where he had people inside his machinery and gave George Lucas ideas for the future, Doug Trumbull is using four real industrial robots in his on-off-on *Brainstorm* movie... *Sapphire and Steel*'s Joanna Lumley has the role of the French reporter investigating the life and crimes of Insp Clouseau in *Trial of the Pink Panther*, which uses up odds and ends from all of Peter Sellers' *Panther* films...



AMITYVILLE II

Dino de Laurentiis has been home to Rome for the first time in years. His message to Italy's media: "I should have left for Hollywood years earlier." His visit was to oversee the final touches being done on *Cosmo The Barbarian* and go shopping for a director for his sequel of another company's movie, *Death in Amityville*. Dino finally selected fellow Italian Damiano Damiani. Aha! Maybe that's been the problem with all Dino's flops. His American and British directors couldn't understand him...!

YOU DIRTY... DOGS!

The Canadians have a problem. They're making this horror movie called *Rats*. It stars, if you're really interested, that *Police Surgeon* chap, Sam Groom (if you're an insomniac, you'll know him from TV) and a smashing Canadian actress, name of Sara Botsford. Plus heaps of big rats. Men-eaters! "But you can't make a real rat look all that fierce," says the film's Toronto becker, Gordon Arnold. "At first glance, rats look cute and cuddly." (Oh really?) "We'd have to use special effects and with rats it would have been too difficult." He means: too expensive. (The movie is costing only 1.5m. dollars which is chicken, well, ratfood these days). That's the problem. How do you fix it? "Dogs are easier," says Gordon Arnold.

And so forty pooches, all but two of them being deschunds, have been imported from Hollywood with their trainer to wear customised rat suits and make like 3ft rodents... but no, I'm sorry, I can't write while I'm laughing... I mean, can't you see it. Sara Botsford going all white and panic-struck. "I'm not going back in there," she tells handsome hero Sam Groom. "Why not?" sez Sam. "Because... because the place is just crawling with schizophrenic deschunds..."

It's a bit like making *Jaws III* with a goldfish.

Compiled by Tony Crawley

in these film-saving circumstances. He says he had four more scenes only to shoot with Natalie, and two of those could have ended up on the cutting-room floor. He simply re-wrote the other two, giving Natalie's dialogue to one of the lab assistants of Walken, who plays a scientist experimenting in the transmission of brainwaves.

MGM didn't seem to buy any of this. Because rather than the studio, it was Lloyds of London who put up the three million dollars to pay for the final 18 days of shooting. And, *Brainstorm* becomes a crap-shoot... with Lloyds obviously preferring to gamble three million on Trumbull's acknowledged expertise than forking out the full 15 million to MGM.

They might still have to do that, in fact. Because what *exactly* happens next is anyone's guess.

When Trumbull finished shooting (and, before anyone puts up the three

million bucks more required for post-production and special effects work), MGM has the right to view the result. And if the Metro chiefs don't like it, they will shelve it. "The picture can't go into release unless the studio says so," says an MGM spokesman.

Well, I wouldn't be too sure about that, either!

If, for example, MGM doesn't dig *Brainstorm*, and still insists on their 15 million dollars compensation from Lloyds, then it is quite obvious that Lloyds will feel it owns the film and can release it, itself, or more likely, sell it on the open market to another distribution combine.

In short, no matter how good Trumbull's movie may look on the screen, it's a mess. Financial considerations could bury another piece of Trumbullian magic and Natalie Wood's final movie. Hollywood, it seems, is still no place for an artist. Alive or dead.

SPIELBERG '82

Probably in the running for such Oscars this time next year, Steven Spielberg's top-secret newie: *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial* (in his *adventure on earth*). Difficult to keep a title that long a secret. First outsiders to glom some of the E.T. footage were the cinephiles in Las Vegas for the recent showWest convention. Reaction, so I'm reliably informed, was hotter than a non-air-conditioned Vegas hotel room.

Starring Dee Wallace (the Joanne Woodward lookalike from *The Howling*) and Henry Thomas, the film was written by Melissa Mathison and co-produced by Steve and Kathleen Kennedy.

Universal looks like being our kinda company this year, what with the new Spielberg, John Carpenter's re-made *The Thing*—and the Jim Henson-Gary Kurtz *Dark Crystal*, which is back on the Universal schedules and (despite all

that opposition) is being touted as their big 'un for '82.



JEDI LATEST

You'll be pleased to know that Sir Alec Guinness has read and approved the *Revenge of the Jedi* scenario (by George Lucas and Larry Kasdan) and agreed to put on his Ben Kenobi outfit one more time for the Elstree shooting. James Earl Jones is also polishing up those dark and sepulchral Darth Vader tones by playing *Othello* (again?) on Broadway while awaiting his post-production sound-synching chores.

Incidentally, Jones' Shakespearian rival on Broadway was Merlin himself, Nicol Williamson, directing his own version of *Macbeth*. Vader v Merlin? No contest...! Williamson's production flopped after two weeks, while *Othello* goes on until James Earl Jones and his lego, Christopher Plummer, get bored with it.



JEDI MONEY

Budget note: I think the typographical gremlins got to work on my recent column stating that *Jedi* was costing 25 million dollars (*Starburst* 43). (It was *either gremlins or your typing, Crawley—Ed.*) So let's get the facts right this time. *Jedi* costs 32.5 million dollars... just half a million more than *Star Wars* (10m.) and *Empire* (22m) combined. Not even Yoda can lick inflation.

What...? Oh sure, Yoda's back in the new one. Of course he (it) is.

ITV STAR WARS

While we're on the subject of money, you can forget those tales of ITV picking up *Star Wars* for a paltry three million dollars. As the man from 20th Century-Fox put it, "*Star Wars* is a very big picture—three million dollars would be ridiculous!" The actual price was closer to five mil! For which tidy sum, ITV can show the movie a very limited number of times... anytime after this autumn.

Or put it another way, what with Mike Yarwood in their bottomless pocket already, what else do you think ITV's main Christmas cracker movie will be this year?

BOND'S OSCAR

Something you may have missed in all the usual mad melée of Oscar nominations and eventual happy, smiling statuette winners... James Bond was finally honoured by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences this year. Well, the sole remaining Bond producer, Cubby Broccoli, was—and just a week before his 73rd birthday.

Cubby was presented with the Irving C. Thalberg Memorial Award, named after the wunderkind MGM producer of the '30s, and given annually to a producer with a body of high quality movie work over the years. That's our Cubby, all right. As the Academy governors' citation put it, the dozens Bondanza movies

"brought to a world audience the most popular film series in the history of motion pictures. The James Bond films also have established a new genre of screen entertainment, combining action and romance with innovative sets and special effects wizardry." (Romance?) At least count, more than a billion-and-a-quarter people have paid to see 007 films in global cinemas.

While we at *Starburst* congratulate Cubby, I must really query why the Thalberg award went to him alone. He's a great guy and all that, but it's a matter of record, and not merely to film buffs,

that he produced only the last three Bond outings by himself. The previous nine were co-produced by Cubby and his original Eon Films partner, Harry Saltzman. Harry may not have contributed as much love, enthusiasm and veritable panache to the series, but he sure did work on them. In fact, he had the rights to the Ian Fleming books and was running out of time, backing and interested parties to put them on-screen when Cubby heard about it, phoned him and well, the rest is history. And, as such, Harry should have been in on the Academy's act, I'd say.



THINGS TO COME

AND FRANCE'S OSCARS

Before the Oscar's were handed out, the BAFTA awards or Canada's Genies, the top French film-makers won their Cesars. To my horror, Isabelle Adjani,

was voted Best Actress for that dreadfully pretentious *Possession* "horror" film (*Starburst 44*). I've seen cameraberts acting better than the thin-talent of Adjani. Still, shows what you can get for vomiting for reel... I've no hassle, though, with Jean-Jacques Annaud winning both Best Director and Best Film for his truly amazing *Quest For Fire*.



... AND ILM'S OSCARS

Given out a week before the world-vision Oscar show were fourteen scientific/technical awards decided upon by Academy governors' vote from recommendations by Joseph Westheimer's high tech committee. These are the trophies you rarely see being presented in the much cut Oscar night show sold around world tv networks. A couple of years ago, they were all chucked in at the end with rapid voice-overs during the closing credits. They should not be so belittled, because these awards—genuine Oscar statuettes, plaques or certificates—are for the backroom boys inventing and perfecting the very tricks that the film trade increasingly requires to survive.

George Lucas' lads did well, therefore. His top sound men, Ben Burtt (well, okay just this once, Ben: Benjamin P. Burtt, Jr.) and Richard L. Anderson got an Oscar each for their editing of a "completely invented" soundtrack enhancing the realism of all the action in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Richard Edlund and George's Industrial Light and Magic, Inc., won a scientific and engineering plaque for creating the beam-splitting optical composite picture printer... it says here for the more technically minded among you would-be Dick Edlunds out there, this is

a four projector VistaVision-to-anamorphic format optical printer for complex travelling matte composition. Their award was also for engineering the Empire film camera system, which is a VistaVision reflex camera and motion recording device for special effects photography.

Academy certificates also went to ILM's Dennis Muren and Stuart Ziff for developing a film figure-mover for use in animation photography. And it's a pleasure to add that Peter D. Perks of Oxford Science Films, was similarly Academy Award certificated for development of the outfit's microscopic photography, I could go on with details of Nelson Tyler's helicopter film camera platform... the Burbank Studio's 24-frame colour video systems (Universal's as well), Ernest F. Nettman's pitching lens breakthrough and more. Fourteen such research (developing) new devices, methods, formulas, discoveries and inventions. But I'll pinpoint just one more—the Oscar statuette going to Japan's Fuji Photo Film company for its new ultra-high-speed colour negative for movies. I somehow doubt if George Lucas, Steven Spielberg and the rest of the movie brats will be switching from their beloved Technicolor and Metrocolor just yet, but people like Walerian Borowczyk never uses anything other than Fujicolor. Boro today, Hollywood tomorrow!

TV ET, OK?

Obviously hoping to cash in on Steven Spielberg's new ET movie, a new US tv series is headed this way. It's called *The Phoenix* and stars a certain Judson Scott as a super-powered being from another time, another place. Richard Lynch co-stars and I'll have more for you once I've seen the pilot show.

TOPPING TAPS?

I'm not sure it's my place to go commenting on other critics' comments but, hell, well, I can't stop it this time. There is a movie called *Evilspeak* around, about which I've written here before. If

memory serves me right, I've already said the film stank more than a little. Imagine my surprise, therefore, on reading a review by no less an influential American critic than Kevin Thomas of the Los Angeles Times calling it amusing, imaginative, and in the gratifying tradition of *Willard*.

Willard was about rats. *Evilspeak* is just ratty. Thomas is correct when he also describes it as an indictment of military academy life in America, yet off the wall when he adds: "in it's spoofy, throwaway manner, it's arguably more effective and infinitely less heavy-handed than *Taps*." Well... each to his own, I'm sure. I preferred Tim Hutton's *Taps* film. So there!



THINGS TO COME

KRULL SPIEL

How does this grab you...? "Somewhere beyond our universe there is a distant world. A world where twin suns rise, good triumphs over evil and love prevails. A world called..." No, it's not Peter Pan's Never Never Land but the setting of Peter Yates' new fantasy movie, *Krull*. That's how the (opening) ad hype goes. Lanky American Ken Marshall has the main role, supported by a British cast headed by Lysette Anthony, Francesca Annis and Freddie Jones. Derek Meddings is in charge of visual effects. Much more on this in Phil Edwards on-set report, coming soon in *Starburst*.

CORMAN MOVE

Roger Corman's New World Pictures have picked up a nifty underwater science fiction original, *Lords of the Deep*. Howard Cohn directed this thriller about the first underwater research colony in the year 2000. It's probably cheap—but good. Roger has always been lucky with sea trips, right from his second production, *The Monster From The Ocean Floor* (1954), through *Swamp Woman*, *She-God of Shark Reef*, *Attack of the Crab Monsters*, *Viking Women* and *the Sea Serpent* on to the 1980's *Monster aka Humanoids From The Deep*.

I'm sure Roger would buy even my own version of *Hamlet* if I called it *The Great Dane From The Sea Floor*.

CHANGE OF GENRE

In all the recent buying and selling of Hollywood companies and studios, we've lost one combine that supplied most of the recent glut of horror films. Avco Embassy has been bought by tv giants Norman Lee and Jerry Perenchio. The re-named Embassy Pictures is moving far from Avco trend of *The Howling*, *Escape From New York*, *Terror Train* and the like. This horror flick (of about a dozen to be shot this year) is *The Beguineer*, written by the *Norme Rae* team and starring *Regime's* find Elizabeth McGovern.

For it's first release, however, Embassy fall back on the last Avco Embassy fantasy trip: Charles Band's *Parasite*, with ghoulish parasitical effects by Stan Winston and James Kagel. If this one does well, it might just change the bosses' ideas about horror. And it should do well. It's shot in Chris J. Condon's Stereovision 3-D system.

SUPERVISION

Hard to believe—is it really only four years?—but *Superman 1* has been shown on American network television already. It had a prime-time spot on a prime night, Sunday; and did well enough in the ratings. No. 1 was not No. 1, though. Supie was beaten to the draw by the popular CBS news-documentary show, *60 minutes*. Perry White would approve of that, I'm sure.

CHANGE OF HOME

Mad Maxers George Miller (director) and Byron Kennedy (producer) have been spending some of their sudden influx of *Mad Max 2* hit income. They've bought the old Metro theatre in

Sydney's King's Cross area as their new offices and mini-studio facility. They're not anticipating a *Mad Max 3*—or not yet. Instead they're starting a six hour tv series about how the Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam was sacked by Governor General Sir John Kerr—and then a new feature *Roxanne*.

QUICK TAKES II

Ex-Avenger Gareth Hunt stars in the British credit card comedy, *Funny Money*... Alexander Salkind spending a fraction of his *Superman* budgets (just two million bucks!) on *Where's Percival*, another Arthurian view written by his wife Berta Dominguez and now being directed by George Cukor (at 83)... John Carpenter's *Escape From New York* did its best Euro-business in West Germany. How come? They re-named it *Rattlesnake*... Mel Brooks wants Albert Finney as the Sheriff of Nottingham in his British *Robin Hood* caper... After *Outland*, Peter Hyams going outlandish again with *Star Chamber*... *Conan The Barbarian* is rated R in America; that usually means X over here...

RAIDERS GAME

You've seen the movie, now play the game... Atari Inc., America's top manufacturer of home video games (and part of Warner Brothers like everything seems to be in America) are putting out a *Raiders of the Lost Ark* game in November. They sell you the cartridge, you plug it in and—voilà, you're Indiana Jones and in all kinds of difficulties—(unless you've already conquered *Space Invaders* and the rest). The *Raiders* game will be exclusive to homes; you won't find it in your local video alley. Atari feel they have a winner. They know all about winning. Their home game sales in 1980 amounted to 400-million dollars. Last year, sales topped the billion mark. With *Raiders*, they expect to reach two billion.

3D TV

New Orleans' WGNO-TV has become the first American commercial tv station to transmit a 3-D movie. And it wiped out all the other opposition from the three major networks that night. In all, some 400,000 pairs of the good old red 'n' green glasses were bought for the February airing of *Revenge of the Creature* (1955). "There were a few people who were a little disappointed that it didn't have more coming out of the screen action," reports station manager Paul Krimmiers. "But the effect was really there and most people liked it." They're keeping their goggles handy, too, as WGNO-TV aims to follow their 3-D night up with *Diabol M For Murder* (1954) and *House of Wax* (1953). Paul may get the Hitchcock movie but Vincent Price's tri-di number is out of the question. Warner Brothers are making too much money by re-issuing it at the moment...

SON OF BRUCE

Getting impatient for *Jaws III*? In need of a Bruce-fix? Well, look behind you. The *Great White* is on its way... with a publicity campaign costing 4,500 dollars, which is more than likely more than the rip-off movie cost. Since Christmas



THINGS TO COME

2,114 teaser trailers have been on American screens, plus a series of nine different tv commercials, twenty-two advance men planting media features around and about. Other ideas include a greet white shark hunt off the Monterey coast, tv specials on sharks and the making of this film, wind surfing contests run by the Top 40 US radio stations, plus point of sale displays selling—you've guessed it—inflatable sharks. All this for an Italo-American co-prod, directed by one Enzo G. Castellari and featuring those absolutely terrific stars ... James Franciscus and Vic Morrow?

The Film Ventures release—making a big sales pitch at the American Film Market and if they didn't sell out there, at Cannes as well—carries a Warning Notice on it's ad art. "Intense scenes of overwhelming suspense require parental discretion." Shouldn't that be intense hype requires parental discretion?

DISNEYVISION

The Disney invasion of the tele-series has begun. Again. (It's been a long time since *Davy Crockett*). In a deal with the mighty CBS network across the pond, the Disney studio is dusting down some of its previous film hits and, as happened to *M*A*S*H*, *House Calls*, *Private Benjamin*, turning them into series format for the box. First on show was *Herbie, The Love Bug* featuring, naturally, the star of that series of films, Deen Jones (and I'd say, quite a lot of off-cuts from the movies, too). *Herbie* is something I think I can live without on my tube.

Rather better, although not yet given the nod to go to a full series, is Disney's pilot for *Beyond Witch Mountain* based on the pair of psychic kids in *Escape To/Return From Witch Mountain*, directed by our own Johnny Hough in America in 1975 and 1978. As big names like Ray Milland, Bette Davis, Chris Lee

and Donald Pleasence peopled these movies, there's no chance they'd be interested in joining the projected series. Veteran Eddie Albert, however, repeated his "kind-hearted but cantankerous" pal of the psychic aliens from the first film, with Efram Zimbalist Jr. playing the Milland/Lee style villains.

Another Briton, Bob Day, directed the pilot which had Tracey Gould and Andy Freeman filling in for the extra-terrestrial kids, Tina and Tim, played in the movies by Kim Richards and Ike Eisenmann. The new kids were fine, the adults (both on screen and at home) have little to engage their interest in though. Unless the scripts are beefed up (not even Disney can have rich villains trying to exploit our ESP kids every week), CBS may consider this show suitable for tots only and therefore too expensive to make as a series. In that case, we'll be stuck with *Herbie*. Not a happy thought.

IT'S IMAGGIC!

With the (weak) Paris and (stronger) Avoriaz fantasy fests out of the way for another year, the Spanish are beginning to rev up interest for their third International and Imaginative and Science Fiction Cinema Festival in Madrid during April 16 week. (They call it IMAGGIC, for short. They need to). The organisers are hoping for about eighteen films in competition, plus various "recuperative" sections of golden oldies and, this year, a special selection of Spanish genre items ... and a film market.

So far they seem to have invited just about every horror or sf item to have been heard (seen) and read of in the last twelve months. The list looks good, but few of the invitees have accepted as we go to Press. Competing films are (supposedly) including Wes Craven's *Deadly Blessing*, Lewis Teague's *Alligator*, Piotr Szulkis's *War of the Worlds Next Century* and the Ralph Bakshi and Frank Frazetta combo, *Fire and Ice*.

The Madrid jury invites include Sam Peckinpah, actor Michael Piccoli, designer Saul Bass and Messrs Cushing and Lee. Be interesting who (and what) they finally get. So far it's all hype.

CARPENTER'S DREAM

It's not often that John Carpenter does not write—or have a hand in scoring—the music for his movies. *The Thing* is different, though. Not only is it John's re-tread of one of his own very favourite old movies, but he's managed to persuade his favourite movie composer to tune it for him. Ennio Morricone, of course. When John married Adrienne Barbeau, his choice of wedding march music was ... Morricone's theme from *Once Upon A Time in the West*!

REAL GOLD?

You've heard of golden records ... maybe even of the new golden cassettes ... for sales above a million copies. In Canada they have a Golden Reel Award. It goes annually to the biggest money-making Canadian film. The 1981 Reel (reel gold, I wonder?) was handed over in March to producer Ivan Reitman for ... *Heavy Metal*.

David Cronenberg's *Scanners* came third in the Canadian charts by the way.

DUTCH BAN

John Landis's telex machine must be burning ... The Dutch film censors banned *An American Werewolf In London* for under-sixteens. The official, not to say officious reasons was that John's movie contained "disgusting and bloody scenes which can pose a mental threat to youngsters." As John might say, and not oldsters.



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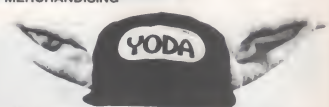
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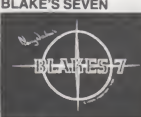
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Review by Alan Jones

I Spit On Your Grave had the distinction recently of being a *cause-celebre* in America when it opened at the height of the violence against women controversy. It was considered so extreme in its depiction of rape and graphic violence that at least one eminent critic, Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, came out against it so vociferously that he forced the distributor (Jerry Gross—no jokes please!) to withdraw it from release. Notwithstanding the fact that the same Roger Ebert also co-wrote *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, he does have a point. It is a film that is hard to defend and in at least two scenes, puts an incredible onus on its audience as to whether they should really be watching the proceedings under the guise of entertainment. But although it is very definitely from the *Last House on the Left* school of film-making, *I Spit On Your Grave* does not have that film's sense of reality that made it such a sick exercise. *I Spit On Your Grave*

does not maintain its level of offensiveness to become a sleaze cult classic as it strains credibility to such an extent that you can't really take it seriously. Taking its title from a 1961 French-made racism exploitation film, *I Spit On Your Grave* was filmed in Connecticut as *Day of the Woman*. It is basically about New Yorker, Jenny Hills (Camille Keaton—Buster's grand-niece), who goes to a secluded country retreat to work on a novel. There she is brutally gang-raped by three local louts and a mentally retarded delivery boy. She is left for dead but after recovering sufficiently sets out to demand vengeance in ways that only low budget film-makers seem to have the warped imagination to muster. The budget film-makers seem to have the warped imagination to muster. The protracted rape, where Jenny is sexually tortured, is as degrading and as squirm-inducing as anything I've ever seen in the exploitation field. It arguably does give the character the sufficient motivation to wreak her terrible revenge be on her four tormentors, but I

refuse to believe that this justification was uppermost in writer/director Meir Zarchi's mind at the time. This irresponsibility would give the "violence against women" lobby enough ammunition to successfully campaign against anything they wished to. As for the castration in the bathtub, all I can say is that, even though I've seen the real thing in the uncensored version of that *Mondo Cane*-type movie, *Savage Man, Savage Beast*, this scored a higher rating on the Richter scale of shock value.

And yet, while I have no intention in defending this unutterable piece of trash, seeing this sort of movie strikes a very necessary balance. How else can one compare and appreciate the genius of people like Tobey Hooper, Russ Meyer, John Waters etc? While films like *I Spit On Your Grave* gain instant notoriety and deserved elements to an art-form. For while films of this nature will always continue to outrage middle-class proprieties, the more sophisticated will see them for what they really are. ●

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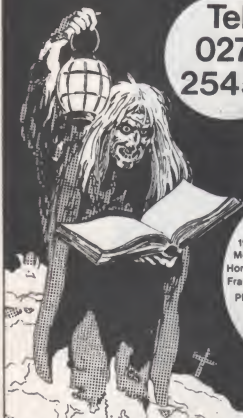
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Review by Alan Jones

bloody moon

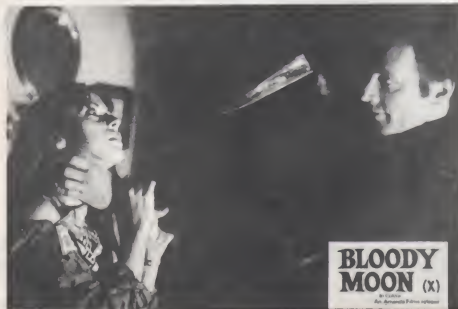


Solely because of his sheer prolific output does continental director Jess (short for Jesus) Franco carve a niche for himself in the horror genre. He has made over 200 films since 1968, many of them shot back to back, but all of them earning the dubious rating of between mediocre to hopelessly sub-standard. If he is (in) famous for any film at all, it is for his version of *Dracula* that starred Christopher Lee and was supposedly the most faithful to Bram Stoker's original.

His latest film to reach these shores is the German/Spanish co-production **Bloody Moon** and it is no better or worse than anything else he has directed. Why change the habits of a lifetime? It still has a routine and incoherent plot, shoddy gore effects, disjointed sexual violence with sado-masochistic leanings and the lack of anything resembling style or directorial skill. The only thing I can really say in **Bloody Moon's** favour is that at least the photography is good.

As mentioned the story is non-existent. The setting is an exclusive language school on the Spanish coast where all the girls enrolled for the summer are beautiful, promiscuous, stupid and wear lurid designer fashions. Gradually the girls are mutilated by a maniac on the loose, who could be any one of four possible red herrings, until, too late for its own good, the gree motive is well and truly established. Prime suspect to begin with is the disfigured son of the Contessa Maria Gonzales who, two years earlier, donned a Halloween mask etc, etc. His disfigurement incidentally has to be courtesy of lesson one in a very early basic guide to make-up by Dick Smith. Suspicion then shifts to Antonio, the macho womaniser and gardener and then switches to an unexplained slobbering retard until all is revealed in the startling! revelation that it was in fact the principal of the school in larcenous league with the Contessa's daughter. Wow!—I'd never have guessed. Amid all this rancid rubbish Franco manages to drag in incest, decapitation, a breast impalement and chain-saws.

As you can tell, blatant pandering to the most unsophisticated audience who don't care what they see as long as it's violent and features naked girls is what Jess Franco, and his closest rival in this unenviable field, Joe D'Amato, are all about. But while we are waiting for another attack from the killer D'Amato, **Bloody Moon** is here to remind us of the yawn-inducing depths that the genre can be lowered to by these uncaring, inept hacks ●



opinion

The *Philadelphia Inquirer's* film critic has refused to review any more horror films. So what, you say, up there in Bridlington or Pasadena: you don't read the *Enquirer*. Nor, for that matter, do I. But I think this critic's ban (supported by his editor) is worth considering.

Desmond Ryan is the guy's name. He makes it clear he's against horror or fantasy schlock. Gross output of crud. He doesn't mind exercising his expertise on more professionally turned out numbers like (his choice) *Venom*. But no more columns on films in the *Maniac* depths.

To be frank with you, I can't say I altogether disagree with Ryan. I know what he's going through. So, I'm sure, does John Brosnen, Alan Jones, Phil Edwards and the rest of the *Starburst* critics. There is, surely, nothing worse on any screen than badly-made chillers resorting to decapitation, amputation and bucket upon bucket of Mex Factor or pigs' blood to make up for shortcomings in the generating of true horror end suspense.

However, and in common again with my colleagues I trust, I also believe that people who set themselves up (and therefore usually volunteer to be) movie critics have a duty to their readership to review *all* movies in whatever genre their publications are concerned with. That's fantasy in all its multitudinous forms here at *Starburst*; and everything, but everything, in our sister publication, cinema. Just as newspapers are supposed to print all the news that fits, critics should look at *all* films.

How else do we find the (occasional) nugget among the all cheepo ranks? How else can we warn our readers against being nipped off (yet again) by producers and directors more interested in separating filmgoers from their cash than in entertaining, pleasing, provoking or—fair enough—scaring the living bejæzus out of them?

How else, for example, could one properly review a reel loser like *The Shining* without being able to compare it with the less hyped, smaller, bloodier fantasy flicks on the scene?

How else, in fact, can one do the critics' job . . . ?

So, what do you have to say about all that, Desmond Ryan? "I consider films like *Madman* and *Maniac* far worse than sexual pornography," is what he has to say.

And more . . . "They're more obscene and hopelessly repetitive. Paying attention to such films dignifies them. I've better things to do with my time than watch women being chopped up."

Yes, well, that makes sense. Some of it; like his last line. But reviewing a film does not dignify it, unless the review happens to dignify the film. A bad review, a thumbs-down notice, dignifies nothing (apart from a witty critic).

Also, he does not say if he does review pornographic films. Knowing Philadelphia, I presume not. So now, Ryan has banned porno and horror. What's next, meety? Thrillers, musicals, Westerns? Certain actors, actresses, producers, directors he doesn't approve of, either aesthetically or politically? Camera-men he hates? Make-up women he can't stand? Special effects technicians he's never heard (or written) about?

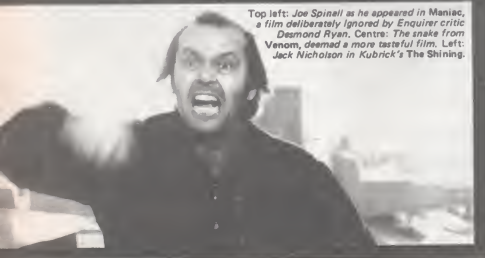
Once you start banning things, Des, there's no stopping.

"I've written exhaustively about horror films," he goes on. "I really have nothing more to say about them."

Aha! That's more like it, Des. There seems a kernel of truth in that statement. The poor guy is jaded by horror. Understandable if you live in America. John Brosnen and the rest of us can get a mite jaded, too. That's why we share the films among us. To avoid any one of us suffering from literal over-kill.

Ryan seems to have reached exactly that stage in





Top left: Joe Spinell as he appeared in *Maniac*, a film deliberately ignored by *Enquirer* critic Desmond Ryan. Centre: The snake from *Venom*, deemed a more tasteful film. Left: Jack Nicholson in Kubrick's *The Shining*.

life. In that case, he should either quit film reviewing altogether or at least hand the horror/fantasy duties, and any other genre upsetting his sensibilities, to another (younger?) critic to handle.

I mean, c'mon, Ryan, you either *are* a film critic or you are not!

And that's the fundamental trouble with his ilk. Most film critics aren't... One wonders at times if they're even interested in the medium. To sit in at a Press screening—in London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Rome, Rio, even Birmingham or Bourne-mouth—is an eye-opener about the people behind those familiar bylines. They are *forever* moaning. About the unknown infiltrator daring to sit in *their* seat. Or the guy in the next row, smoking too much. Being placed too near a rival (or detested) critic... the smell of a certain reviewer's funny ciggies. And on and on...

The most frequent complaint of all is about the number of films they might have to see in a week—or a day. Four this week? Terrible, too much, what do they think we are...

Certain of the London crowd (no names, no peck-drill... no dignifying 'em) go potty if they've got to see two in a day!

And yet, they nearly all volunteered for this job. (When I started my journalistic career working on local newspapers, in Salisbury it was, and despite rumours to the contrary the news was not hand-set in those days, my first question to the Chief Reporter was: Who does the films? His answer: You do).

Film critics are presumed by their readers to have a love of movies. Not so. The majority pushed hard for the job, because it sounded an easy number. Few late nights, lots of perks. Film critics are also presumed, by the film combines, to be delicate creatures, in need of much wining and dining sustenance... If a new release doesn't quite deserve such outlandish publicity treatment (and ironically it's always the films that need such assistance that never get it; the extravagance is lavished on Bond and *Superman*, etc), there's still always mucho plonk, hard stuff, sarnies and sausage rolls laid on after Press screenings.

As if the critics have to be compensated for spending a few hours a day doing what they're damned fortunate to be paid for doing. Their job. Watching movies. (Or, as seen often enough in London, sleeping through them).

There are no eats and drinks laid on at Paris projections, I'm pleased to say. French critics do not require such molly-coddling; or, as far as I'm concerned, bribery. They do love and understand cinema. They just want to catch the flick and split, in order to catch another screening... before picking up the wife, girl/boyfriend and pay to see another movie in a cinema. Yes, London—pay!

The top British and American critics, the names, never pay. For anything.

So, critics have fast of clay. Don't we all. Several British critics decide not to review certain films, or genres—or throw them away in their final two/three line put-down paras. Desmond Ryan remains the only critic I've heard about to at least be honest enough to go public with his banning certain films from his column.

I still maintain that he is misguided. There is, in fact, quite another name for Ryan's action. And that is a word that is supposed to be anathema to all critics. Censorship.

And in case, the one-time Philadelphia film *Inquirer* has forgotten that critics have been likened to eunuchs (they watch, criticise, but can't do it themselves), let me also pass on Peter Ustinov's latest description of censorship. A censor, he says, is like an elderly or senior citizen who has nothing more to do in life and no longer participates... and therefore finds joy only in restraining others.

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JAMIE LEE CURTIS

Jamie Lee Curtis is the daughter of Janet Leigh, the sister of Kelly Lee—daughters of Tony Curtis; although one almost writes "Tony Lee". The Lee is as lean, lissome and lovely. At 23, Jamie is the best screamer in Hollywood—in Canada and more recently in Australia. Five films inside two years have vaulted "just another film star couples' brat" into a cult following. The Queen of the new horror-fantasy brigade... the screen's first new horror star (and indeed, a female at that) for a decade or so.

She's a welcome addition to Starburst's gallery of Fantasy Femeles. No, forget fantasy! She's great fun to be with in reality. In the flesh. Exciting. Exuberant. With an enormous zest for life—and her new found career.

She's such a high octane less, it's rather surprising she can actually sit still long enough to be interviewed. She's more usually on the go-go-go. Tennis, surfing, gymnastics, mountain climbing (no wonder when she guested in a *Charlie's Angel* spot, she played a champion golfer). She plays guitar too, paints, uses a camera, writes songs—and lately her first movie treatment. She's sat up her own company with her mother and sister—and she aims to be directing within the next few years.

She's so busy, five minutes with her would tire even Clark Kent.

John Carpenter found her, of course—linguishing in tv-land. His producer, partner, and co-writer, Debra Hill, pushed for her. And that's how *Halloween's* memorable baby-sitter, Laurie Strode, was born... re-born, re-raised annually now in America during the Halloween holiday. She's tested her new found star wings (and very successfully) away from her Carpenter mentor, but she's back at the moment—and is likely to remain a firm member of the Carpenter clan, bringing her mother into it for *The Fog*, and now headlining the long-awaited *Halloween II* film, co-starring Donald Pleasence again. It's being produced



by John and Debra, and directed by their usual art director, Tony Wallace.

And I wouldn't be surprised if she didn't turn up in Carpenter's still-unscripted Western, *El Diablo*. She's built for Westerns. And Carpenter's idol, Howard Hawks, would have loved her. She's his (Hewk's or Carpenter's) kind of women. Thin, angular, attractive in an off-beat—certainly off-Hollywood Boulevard-beat—manner... and not really the helpless, hapless heroine she plays so well.

"She was just one of several girls auditioning for *Halloween*," Carpenter recalls of their meeting. "She came in to read. She had a tremendous quality, just tremendous. Different! Very tomboyish in a way. Yet very sexy—and very pretty, no matter what she says. And I never knew she was related to Janet Leigh at all!"

"Debra was the one pushing her the hardest. I had, I must admit, another actress in mind. But Debra kept saying, 'Let's try Jamie...' And it worked out really well."

Didn't it just?

Starburst: Your mother says you were an actress in the cradle, but then all mothers are prone to exaggerate...

Jamie Lee Curtis: I think I was a bit of a ham as a child and had a penchant for playing; acting. We just liked to joke about it. She says I came out tap-dancing. I say, I came out quoting Shakespeare. "Dut damned spot!" That never gets a laugh except with the English!

How did you decide—and it was obviously a big decision in that town so full of film family relatives jumping into movies—to take up the family business? Lemme tell ya, that never really entered my mind—continuing the family tradition. It was absolutely by happenstance that I got a contract at Universal, when I was on my Christmas break from collage.



You mean the 1967 contract was among your Christmas presents?

Well no, I'd been out meeting people at studios, but not really expecting to get a job. And then I got a job. Just like that?

Yeah!

Without any training?

Yeah. Nothing! I don't think that college acting classes are suitable for films or television acting. Nowadays films and television are the media acting world. The stage is still around, but it's not really half as important as it used to be. And nobody gives classes in film technique. I feel it's a very simple thing—acting. If you let it be, it really is very easy to do. But film acting needs a certain technique... and should be taught.

No doubt you picked up a lot of that technique—at least the technical terms and what they meant—at home anyway?

Not a lot. Some. I remember in college having to memorise a list of terms in the theatre—downstage, upstage, left wings, proscenium. But nothing, you see, for film-talk. What is cheating for the camera? What is close-up? What is an off-camera look? What is a two-shot? What is raking?

What is raking?

Raking is when you have more than three people in a straight line, but it mustn't be straight but raked in order for the camera to see everybody... Most people—most actors don't know these terms. They're foreign to the usual acting class. There's cinema schools where you learn the art of film-making... but not film acting. I respect theatre actors, but acting for films—for cameras—is completely different. It's all broken up into pieces to start with, of course. I mean, I'd like to get some theatre actors and out them in front of the camera and say, "Now do it again... do it again!" And as they're looking scared, say, because a killer's coming

after them, there's no dialogue, but you'll have the director, going, "Right! Look to your right... here he comes, here he comes... Get scared! No, not too much... Bring it down a little... Now, look to your left—very quickly!" And the cameraman's going, "Take up the focus here... C'mon guys, get it into focus, Jesus Christ!" And they're all saying things like this as you're supposed to be acting scared and... *Not supposed to be laughing?*

Not supposed to be listening or looking at them. And it's very difficult, honest.

So how were you, first time on a set in—what?—the Operation Petticoat TV series?

I'd done some very small television stuff before, but *Petticoat* was the first prolonged stuff on camera. It was just the most foreign thing I'd ever felt. Amazing. In a huge machine and eight or ten people around it. In a very intimate moment for a scene, there's maybe fifteen people around you with cameras and lights, the boom-mike, the lights three inches from your nose. Or worse of all, you've a radio-mike taped to your chest! I've done more films with radio-mikes and I cannot tell you how awful they are! They have a battery pack that looks twice as big as a packet of cigarettes and weighs about 3 lb... oh no, maybe 2 lbs. You have to stick that in your pocket, or tape it to your belly. Or if you're not wearing something tight, tape it to the inside of your thigh, run the wires up and pin the mike to your bra-strap and you must only move in a certain way or the material will ruffle against the mike—it's a pain in the... But they never think of all that when you're trying to be intimate with someone in a scene...

They sound more trouble than they're worth. Well, sometimes the proximity of where you're shooting is not conducive to a boom or long mike. The sound man can't get in there. If you're not touching them they're good. You get a very good, clean sound. But oh boy! once you start moving it's



... like this. *(She proceeds to rustle some cigarette pack cellophane in front of my mike, then brushes her hair close to the mike. Noisy!)* You seem to enjoy scaring the hell out of your audiences?

I don't know if I enjoy doing it to people. I don't personally enjoy horror films, myself. In fact, I hate 'em! I will not go to see them. I've got to see my own *(she chortles)* because it's in the contract! I have to see 'em once! But you must have seen others to make you refuse to see any more?

Oh, sure, I used to see—all of them. All my friends would go "Aw c'mon Jamie, gotta go see these—you're such a chicken." So I go: "Okay." And I go. But I gotta tell you—never again. I made a pact, actually at New Year's Day 1980: I'm not going to see another horror film.

Which film prompted that?

Oh! Something awful, really awful. *Alien*, I think. I didn't like *Alien*, I gotta tell you.

How did you first get together with John Carpenter? I auditioned for John and Debra Hill for *Halloween*... when was it? 1978!

When he was still an unknown quantity in America? Right. But not in England because of *Assault*, right? But I didn't know who he was. I had no idea! I read this filmography and it said *Dark Star* and *Assault on Precinct 13*—and I'd never heard of either one. I went, uh, okay... I mean his credits could have been *Cherryhill High* and *The Pom Pom Girls* for all I knew about him. But I knew from the day we started working that he was wonderful. He's got such a

convivial... *Obviously your close relationship began working on the set?*

Sure, but at an audition you're very nervous. When you finally get the job you go back in to say Hello and begin to meet each other. One evening the three



girls—Nancy Loomis, P.J. Soles and myself—went over to his house and talked about what he wanted our relationship to be. Other than that, I didn't know him very well. You don't have the time to get to know people very well or how they are to work with until you start shooting. We'd never rehearsed or anything.

*Were you wary of him? I mean, if we call **Halloween** a horror film, weren't you—*

*Oh sure, it's a horror film! Fine, I just didn't want to get into any Chris Lee-like debate about what is or isn't a horror vehicle. So... weren't you rather wary of this young director, completely unknown to you, wanting you for a horror flick, you being the daughter of Janet Leigh of **Psycho** and all of that possible exploitation.*

*No! I've never been offered a film before. Never ever. Nothing! And I never thought for one minute of the fact that she's known for **Psycho** until the Associated Press did a photo-thing of two pictures together. One of her screaming in **Psycho** and one of me screaming from **Halloween**. I looked at that and went, "Oh my god!"*

You really mean to say you hadn't considered the possibility before then?

*Honestly! Look, my problem is that **Psycho** was at least twenty films into my mother's career. God forbid, they'll only remember me for **Halloween**! I mean, it's a wonderful film and I was thrilled to be in it. Everybody gets to do their first film but most people's debuts are not in a *won-der-ful* movie. To make my debut with a lead in a film that is so successful, so widely known and respected is just fabulous... But it's only the beginning?*

Hope so.

*It sure looks that way. You've had three more out already, another awaiting release. Now you've done **Halloween II**. Who knows what you'll eventually be*

remembered for? How was the working relationship with John?

*As I say, he had such a control. He knew exactly what he wanted, shot for shot. He knew! We showed up and he knew where he was going. And I mean, that film was so low-budget... **Halloween** was made for \$300,000! I mean it's illegal how low-budgeted it was! So you don't have time to mess around with a budget like that. The director has got to know every shot he wants. And John sure did. We worked the usual hours, nothing extra. Twenty days we made that film in. A million dollars a day it must have made by now. Easy. And then some.*

Could you see that it was going to work as you shot it?

*Nope! I was so nervous. This was my first movie and I was like... (she shivers). All I remember was shaking a lot. I don't think anybody would have any premonitions that it was gonna be that good—that successful. If we look back before John was known, and I said to my friends, "I'm making a three-hundred-grand horror film called **Halloween**, shooting twenty days in Pasadena," they'd go, "Oh! that's very nice, Jamie, congratulations... I'm doing a 20th Century-Fox film with Peter O'Toole and John Schlesinger's directing and it's a \$100-million budget..." No one had any idea what **Halloween** could be. I wasn't even thinking about that. I was just... shaking *Petrified!* Not a bad feeling to have. You had to be scared stiff, anyway.*

Yeah, you're right, and I'm sure that helped. I'm glad I was a little vulnerable at being in a first film, because the girl was very vulnerable. John has taught me a lot about vulnerability.

All the top women stars had it—Marli... more than most.

*I'm still learning. Of course, in **The Fog**, all the characters are a little vulnerable because they are all potential victims of a menace that is terrorising the entire town. The more I learn about the art, the more I*

*prefer playing vulnerable people. It gives the audience something to relate to. Without vulnerability, one is usually the heavy or the bad guy. But this was just true to life for you in **Halloween**?*

Right. I think I was more petrified than Laurie Strode was. I mean, everyday I came home crying... thinking I was going to be fired... thinking I was going to be awful... that I was awful!

You literally felt you'd be sacked?

Oh yeah... right on the first day! The first day I shot, I did one scene, then they moved locations and I wasn't in the next scene and by the time I came out of the dressing area—the motor-home, we used—the main people, John and the cameraman, Deen Cundey, and everyone else had already left for the other location, setting everything up. I didn't get to really talk to them about how the first scenes went. So, I went home crying, saying, "Oh my God, they didn't like it. It must have been awful. I'm going to be fired!" I sat at home waiting for the phone call telling me I was out. Dropped! Then I got a call that night from John—no, actually I got a message that he'd called and would call me back. And I went, "Oh demm, oh demmit, I'd deed, I'm deed! I've slipped... my first chance to do a movie and boom! it's gone!"

Then John called me back and he said, "I just wanna tell you, Jamie, you're fabulous." It was, I remember, very late, about 11 or 12 that night. I was just going to bed, crying myself to sleep and he called and said, "You did a wonderful job today. I think it's great!"

Knowing how fickle actors can be, did that really set you up for the next day's shooting, or make you neurotic again wondering if you could live up to it? Are you kidding? I went back next day on Cloud 99. I was the most contented young woman in Los Angeles that night. I went to sleep like a baby. Born in Hollywood—literally and cinematically—raised to further cult levels in Canada, you've now

been down-under to *Australa* for a movie with those guys who have been doing rather well with horror subjects, director Richard Franklin and writer Everett de Roche.

Yeah, I like them, too. Didja ever see their Patrick? Wonderful movie. I screened it in Hollywood because I wanted to see Richard's work, and the movie was okay. Better than that, the movie was won-der-ful! The only reason I didn't like some of it was because it was dubbed with American voices, or what they thought were American voices—at least they were less Australian accents. The dubbing was off. Badly. When you dub a whole movie, with people who didn't actually give the performance, it's never the same. You're telling me? I live in Paris where you appear to speak French perfectly!

So you know what I mean. The dubbing was bad. But I loved the film. The visuals. I absolutely thought he

was so wonderful a director... with the typewriter writing all the messages, and things shooting out everywhere. Demmit, it was great!

So how's your *Road Games* with Franklin?

Well, let's get one thing straight—*Road Games* isn't a horror film.

You could have fooled me. What's the ad hype...

"On a 1600 mile stretch of desert highway, someone is playing a game of sex, violence... and sudden death." That sounds like *Halloween on the Road!* No, it's Bogert and Bacall on the road...!

If you say so. But look at the newest Avco Embassy hype on it: "A bizarre and brutal series of crimes involve young, female hitch-hikers and a trucker who becomes both suspect and potential victim."

Weit end see... just you wait and see! Everett de Roche wrote the script and it's oh! much, much, much better—phenomenally better!—than any horror

thing he's done like *Patrick*, *Long Weekend*, *Snapshot* or *Horlequin*. It's a great psychological thriller—and it's not at all graphic.

Well, that certainly takes it out of today's horror market!

Stacy Keach is just wonderful in it. I'm a hitch-hiker and he picks me up. There's been a lotta murders in this area, and he has this theory whodunnit end why he's dunnit. We talk about this end—it's all thinking, not graphic you'll see. We play this game called The Smith and Jones Game. "Let's call this guy Smith or Jones... Now, what did he do with the bodies?" It's fabulous, really interesting.

Won-der-ful, in fact?

Right! I'm thrilled about it.

So far you've made seven movies, created a huge fan following... and you've already formed your own company.



Yes, Generation Productions with my mother and my sister, Kally Lee.
What kind of films is Generation generating?
 We're not sure yet, we're in development stages on a couple of television things and one feature... But I like that expression! You've just given me our ad for the trade papers: Generation is generating!
Great, just give me the company address for my bill...
 The idea behind the company is that instead of sitting around waiting for jobs, we're at least gonna try to generate our own.
You don't seem to be sitting around much of late. Not even here!
 That time can come quicker than you know it. So during those periods of time, I'll be happily writing things, thinking up and developing things, rather than sitting around doing nothing and just waiting for the phone to ring.

You're writing your own screenplays?
 I already did. Well, not a complete screenplay. I'm not capable of doing anything more than a twenty-age treatment, but I've done that—and that will definitely be for Generation. Maybe a big production company will buy it, I don't know... I don't want to talk about it, because none of it is set or really formed yet. It's only twenty pages... very little.
But which direction are you wanting to head in next?
 No horror! Well, to tell you the truth, I wrote a horror film. In fact, I wrote a won-der-ful horror film. It's absolutely fabulous.
Is that the title or a modest description?
 (Laugh). No, the title is *The Myth*. And it's won-der-ful. I'm really excited about it and it's definitely for Generation, oh! definitely. Could be fun. It could be made as a Roger Corman low-budget movie, I don't care. It's my idea and it's my horror film. I'm gonna

make one!
And after Halloween II, that's the last one you'll make?
 Well, it's not even a horror-horror film. It's a natural disaster film. All these natural disasters happen at once and... but wait, wait!
You talk quite technically about filming, equipment, you've said how you've suggest advertising slogans, now you've dreamed up a film of your own—would you like to direct it?
 Oh, I'm planning to do that.
Silly question!
 I will—or at least I may—direct my horror film.
The one that isn't a horror film?
The Myth, yeah.
Soon?
 No, I don't want to do it soon. In the next five to ten years.
What's your sister's part in Generation. She hasn't



Opposite: Jamie Lee Curtis as the hitchhiker caught up in a web of terror in the Richard Franklin film, *Road Games*. Left: A portrait of Jamie Lee Curtis. Below: Stacy Keach and Jamie Lee Curtis in scene from *Road Games*.



followed in the family tradition, I gather.

She's a stockbroker.

Sounds a useful sister.

She works with my step-father. She's very good, too. A wonderful businesswoman. She'll be the business side of the company—and helping on the creative side, as well. See, it's an opportunity for all three of us to play a little, to, you know, just try. God knows, maybe one of the ideas will work. . . I've got a great idea for a sit-com, a situation comedy series on tv. Can't tell you what it is. God, I wish I could. But it's . . . Won-der-ful?

Well, it's really very good!

All this sounds as if we could be losing you from our fantasy films just when we've found you. All your horror films have been modern, set here, now, today. Would you like to have tried some Gothic stuff. . . to tangle with Hammer Films, Chris Lee and company?

This page: The promotional artwork for the Jamie Lee Curtis starring vehicle *Road Games* (to be reviewed next month), directed by the Australian helmer of *Patrick*, Richard Franklin.

The truck driver plays games... The hitchhiker plays games.
And the killer is playing the deadliest game of all!



On a 1600 mile stretch of desert highway
someone's playing a game of
sex, violence, and sudden death!

Road

the thriller that takes
you beyond your nightmares

Games

Starring STACY KEACH as "Dad"
and JAMIE LEE CURTIS as "Hitch" in *ROAD GAMES*
Produced by RICHARD FRANKLIN and BARRY TAYLOR
Written by EVERETT DE ROCHE and RICHARD FRANKLIN
Directed by RICHARD FRANKLIN A QUEST FILMS PRODUCTION
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I'd much rather have worked for Hitchcock—or a real good classic horror film-maker. I think John Carpenter is very close to that, and Richard Franklin is very Hitchcockian in his films—God, I hate that term. Hitchcockian! Franklin is Franklinian! I hate to use that term because Hitchcock's one in a million. God, he's so wonderful!

What about some of your favourite moments in *Halloween*, *The Fog*, etc?

Well, there's one moment in *Halloween*, a real silly thing to want to put on my reel of film clips, because I don't scream in it. I'm not yelling, I'm just walking across the street. From the moment when I leave the house and lock the door, walk to the other door across the street—John used the Steadicam, going boom to the house, back to me, back to the house, back to me—and all the time my face remains emotionless. That's my favourite scene.

After talking with you here, it's difficult to remember you ever being emotionless—or indeed motionless. You're all go!

Oh c'mon, I'm boring. I'm ab-so-lute-ly boring! Not here, you're not. At home, maybe. I live in this little house in Studio City, California, Burbank, USA. I have a dog named Clark, I have two cats, Yuri and Emilia, named after the characters in *The Turning Point*. I have a boyfriend. Not necessarily in that order . . . but maybe so. I do the dishes. I wash my clothing. I have a washer-drier that I got for my 20th birthday.

That'll do. You're ruining your image . . .

I have a maple tree in the back yard and a hammock. Wind-decks. No pool. A pool? Me. Little me. A pool? I gotta tell ya, I'm boring. I read. I watch tv. I wash the news. I'm real boring. Tony. Amazingly enough, I am boring!



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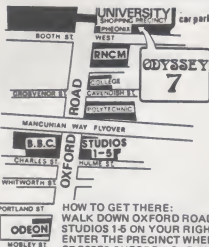
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ESCALATOR.

QUEST FOR FIRE

Review by Phil Edwards

The prehistoric man movie is a sub-genre that's been around since the earliest days of the cinema. Even D. W. Griffith and Buster Keaton each had a go at it back in the silent days.

However, the type of film one usually associates with the subject is more along the lines of *One Million Years BC* and *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* rather than Man's Genesis.

Now comes Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Quest for Fire*, a Canadian financed feature shot on spectacular locations in Scotland, Kenya and Canada.

But *Quest for Fire* isn't the average prehistoric monster movie—no stop motion dinosaurs, no busty starlets flaunting their outside measurements in fur bikinis. *Quest for Fire* is a documentary-style picturisation of life 80,000 years ago and centres around the importance of fire to man and his eternal quest for the source of energy and warmth.

Quest for Fire could have been an extremely tedious exercise, an upmarket *Creations the World Forgot* (The Hammer movie which couldn't afford the talents of a Harryhausen or a Danforth), complete with non-dialogue grunting and assorted tribes at various levels of development. What Annaud has rightfully decided, in collaboration with screenwriter Gerard Brach and producer Michael Gruskoff is to approach *Quest for Fire* as an adventure movie. Certainly it's shored up with reams of research and comes equipped with a "vocabulary" devised by Anthony Burgess and a body language courtesy of Desmond Morris, but the core of the film comes from Jean-Jacques Annaud's understanding of the cinematic medium.

Quest for Fire is actually a very savage film (savage enough for the British censor to snip a scene or two to guarantee the film an AA certificate) and in that respect is fairly uncompromising. Certainly one is aware that the nominal hero Nach (Everett McGill) is sure to triumph in the end in his quest for fire, but other major characters are likely, and often do, succumb to the violence of the milieu.

As Annaud admits (see interview elsewhere in this issue), the film combines all the classic elements of great cinematic entertainment. There's girl/boy romance, action, suspense, narrow escapes, hair breadth rescues, humour and sex. In this respect, *Quest for Fire* offers little that is new. What it does do, however, is to offer staple ingredients within a new setting and manages to blend the mix into something quite new in filmed entertainment.

Annaud's visual sense is acute—*Quest for Fire* is probably one of the few films to be made entirely on location with a minimum of



Top photographs: Man's eternal quest for food, energy and power manifests itself in violent and dramatic tribal displays. Above: Ree Dawn Chong as Ika, sweetheart of the film and a member of a tribe with the secret of making fire. Right middle: An Ullman tribesman eagerly collects food. Below right: Ullmans cautiously approach a herd of mammoths who stand between them and their pursuit of the life sustaining fire that they desperately need.

artificial lighting which really extracts the most from its virgin settings. Nature itself has supplied the best set designer in the business, so even when a herd of woolly mammoths appear or a pair of sabre-toothed lions wanders on (a sequence which runs from suspense to comedy), then the effect is totally believable.

The combined talents of Burgess and Morris also add much to the ambience of the film and I for one found it quite extraordinary to see a large audience so gripped by a film without conventional dialogue exchanges. In effect, Annaud has taken the very basic notion of cinema and made a truly international feature.

Annaud's fine cinematic style is greatly helped by some wonderful performances, particularly from Ron Perlman as Amoukar. Buried under make-up appliances by Christopher Tucker, Perlman manages to give Amoukar a fully rounded character

performance and virtually steals every scene he is in. It's ironic that this, the performance of the year, will probably go unacknowledged at the various award ceremonies, whether it be Hollywood or London.

When invited to a preview of *Quest for Fire*, I must admit I thought it was going to be a chore. Having seen a great number of stills from the film and read several "previews" in worthy film journals, I fully expected it to be an honourable movie. And as is often the case with honourable movies, a boring one too. I also wasn't won over by 20th Century-Fox's Anthropology Wars catchline "A Science Fantasy Adventure".

I certainly didn't expect a movie so rich in entertainment and genuine emotion which seems to race through its hundred minute running time like an express train.

Quest for Fire is certainly a unique entertainment which deserves the widest possible audience ●



JEAN JACQUES ANNAUD

Interview
by
Phil
Edwards



Top: In the opening sequence of the movie, *The Tribe* prepares to repel an attack from a more primitive tribe, a Neanderthal-like group of savages. Above: The aged fire-maker of the more advanced tribe encountered on the quest for fire. Main picture: Our heroes take refuge in a spindly tree when they are chased by a pair of sabre-tooth tigers. Above right: Neoh (Everett McGill), the leader of the quest. Above far right: Our intrepid heroes strike out across country in an effort to bring fire back to their tribe. (Left to right, Ron Barrie, Everett McGill, Neenah Elwood and Rae Dalrymple)



Starburst: When did you first get the idea to make *Quest for Fire*?

Jean-Jacques Annaud: Four years ago, I met a French writer called Gerard Brach, and Gerard normally doesn't want to write for French directors, he doesn't like French cinema. He writes for Polanski and now he is writing for Wedge. The reason he wanted to meet me was that he felt that I was not a typical French director. The producer of *Tess*, Claude Berry, wanted me to direct a book that Gerard would adapt for the screen. In fact we read the book and didn't like it. When we met we realised we had this common passion for ancient civilisation and ancient man. Within a minute we had this passion—Gerard Brach lives in this very small apartment—he's agoraphobic. All the books he had were about prehistoric man and he asked me if I were interested in that. And that very day we decided to a film about early emotions, about a man, not yet a man, with two or three key points like discovering of love, discovering of laughter and the idea really excited us. We said to Claude Berry that we had this terrific idea and he wouldn't listen. He thought we were really out of our minds! A few days after that I was in Los Angeles and told Michael Guskoff about it and he was mad about it and said, "You've got a producer". Was it at that stage that you decided that it would be a film without ordinary dialogue?

The very moment Gerard and I decided to write it. It's funny how nearly all the major decisions about what the film would be like were made within about ten minutes at that meeting, the first day we met. After that we went through eight or ten screenplays, edding characters changing locations and so on. But what made the film were those first ten minutes. Deciding on no dialogue and that the behaviour was the key—knowing it had all the potential for a great adventure, as well as an entertainment. It's like a cake. The base is the entertainment and on the top you have the fruit—the anthropological interest we all share, the psychological aspect of fire. This quest for fire is a quest for energy, something we still have today.

I found *Quest for Fire* interesting because it isn't a glamourised version of prehistoric life, with dinosaurs wandering around and so on.

Two things were prohibited on the shooting—the word "caveman" was never used by my unit. Honestly, that gives me goosebumps. And "prehistoric film" was also forbidden. They would use "paleolithic", "primal man", "primeval", "neanderthal man" but no "cavemen" ever, because the connotation is *The Flintstones*. In order to explain what I wanted, I had to carry two big books. They have been made very famous by my producer and myself because we carried them all around the studio. And in one big fat book was everything we could buy in France, Italy, England and America about that period. There are a few good illustrators who have pictured this distant past. We went to all the museums and bought all the photographs of skulls and everything and that was a book to show what was the look of the people I wanted—the kind of feeling we could get. The other book was primitive tribes today, virgin landscapes today and at the end of all that I had a little section of what I didn't want, and that was the Racquel Welch, *1,000,000 Years BC*, the Prehistoric Women and the *Flintstone* cartoons. I had to explain what I didn't want, because people were so puzzled. They all wanted to see this crazy person with this crazy Michael Guskoff so enthusiastic about this. That's why I'm so proud for Michael. It's so unusual to find a producer so deeply involved. Yes, with an interest in the unusual and also in new talent, as evidenced by his previous films. (*Silent Running*, *Mos Deforests* etc).

An American producer being interested in foreign talent is incredible. This man is trying to help "Koncholvski". He is now starting a picture with this man from Holland.

How long did the shooting take?

It was an enormously long pre-production. The shooting took, altogether, twelve weeks. Altogether the film took four years. It had a very long post production as it's in 70mm, six track stereo—we had to do the sound entirely in the studio in Toronto. In ►





Toronto, because they wanted to prove that Canadians would make good sound, they built an entire studio console to make it possible. We had a terrific unit run by an Irishman called Ken Healey-Ray. We started editing in April and started the sound in July and had the film, as print, last December. We recorded the music here in London.

How did you decide on Philippe Sarde?

I wanted Richard Rodney-Bennett who I met and whose scores I loved. However we could not have any deal with any record company with him. I have known Philippe Sarde for a long time and I didn't want to make the film too French. There is nothing wrong between me and France but I don't want the film to be labelled as a French film, knowing the situation with French cinema. I was somehow reluctant to have one more French name in the credits, although Philippe Sarde is definitely a very talented musician for cinema. When he likes it and spends some time doing it he is very good and a real professional. But at the same time I was very interested in Richard Rodney-Bennett. We were in touch with all the companies and none would make a deal. Then I went to Paris and I said to my producers "All right, let's try something." I went to Philippe Sarde and said "If you get a deal with a record company I have a good reason to have you on this film." Two days later we had a deal with RCA. I was so frank with Philippe, I didn't hide anything, and we have a sensational relationship now. He wanted to prove that he could do a very big international score and we had a fantastic recording session here. We used the London Symphony Orchestra and the London Philharmonic Orchestra and The Strassburg Percussion at EMI studios. I was very confident with him. I told him what inspiration I wanted. Definitely Stravinsky and Prokofiev. When I was writing here in London I had this little Welkman and had Ivan the Terrible in my ears all the time and also *The Magnificat of Pendergast* the Polish composer. In order to edit with my editor I said we'd better do it in front of music because that gives a different mood and rhythm. In Montreal we tried all sorts of music and only four things worked—Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Pendergast and Japanese percussion. We did a temporary score, just from the records. I showed it to Philippe Sarde and he liked what we did. We took a very early decision that as the story is the emergence of men we would have the melody emerge from rhythms as the film goes on. We started with rumbles and percussion and go into more melodic music. We decided to use a solo pan flute because at the beginning it can be used to represent the wind and more and more go into classical flute. The progression of the score was very interesting. I think the score makes the film work the way I wanted it to work.

I think it pulls the film together and adds much to the narrative drive...

Exactly... You know some people with a very intellectual approach said to me why don't I use more

primitive music and stay with the sound of nature. I think I have a film that's different enough. If I have to be different on each level it may be artistic but I wanted to have the simplicity of films like *Gone With the Wind*. It's true that it's simple but it has the virtue of emotion that I wanted in this film. I didn't want to make an anthropological piece. Of course I have all those interests, that's obvious enough but I wanted the music to tell the story, to tell who's the bad guy and who's the good guy, when there is danger, when it is humorous, because people would be totally puzzled otherwise—should they laugh or should they cry. Sometimes you don't know, you don't have the subtitles. And music to me helps to have this subtle quality. Actually Philippe didn't want to make another French film.

I found the audience at the screening I attended quite extraordinary for the first ten minutes they weren't sure whether they should laugh but once they relaxed into it they realised that it was basically an adventure film.

This reaction is absolutely universal. For the first ten minutes there is a tension.

The opening is so savage isn't it...

Yes, the fight. Something else I felt when we were editing... normally on a film you've got twenty minutes of goodwill from the audience. My editor and I felt that twenty minutes was much too long on this film, then we said we have to do this whole presentation in less than ten minutes. I went for a very tough battle for another reason. I wanted to grab the audience somehow. I couldn't grab them with humour because they would not know if they were allowed to laugh. I thought it was too early for romance or emotion. They only thing was to go to the guts, and then of course you run the risk of disturbing people. But what I know is that at that point people are not sure that they are going to like it but after the battle they saw that somehow it's a normal film. The battle is savage and strong but it's a normal story telling. After that there is some emotion and the film starts for the audience with the scene with the lions. There is humour, and then they understand the kind of balance. From that moment they go with the film. Until that point they're not sure.

I found it extraordinary that the audience sat there absolutely gripped watching a film without conventional dialogue. I found that on a second viewing I was actually understanding the sounds and what they meant. How did you involve Anthony Burgess?

We wrote the screenplay without dialogue and it had to work with only descriptions of visual and sound and then we added dialogue with what we call in French "cherabia"—you know, a "wadda wadda wadda" kind of language. Then, I wanted a linguist to help me. Sandy Lieberman who was the president of Twentieth Century said to me one day as a sort of joke "Did you know that Anthony Burgess wrote the first Indo-European dictionary, not to mention his

dialogue for *Clockwork Orange* was also brilliant". I understood that to mean I should ask him. Then I asked him if he was serious and he said yes, that Burgess is a brilliant man. So I sent him the screenplay. Then I got a phone call one day from Anthony Burgess from Monaco. "ARE YOU THE DIRECTOR, ARE YOU THE DIRECTOR? THIS IS BRILLIANT, THIS IS BRILLIANT! I'VE NEVER READ ANYTHING LIKE IT! THIS IS BRILLIANT, THIS IS BRILLIANT! THIS IS FANTASTIC—THIS IS FANTASTIC! COME, COME—WE'LL WORK, WE'LL WORK. IT'S BRILLIANT!" I want to see him in Monaco and he said something like "This is the kind of thing I would love to do. You're going to be in trouble because they're too stupid in the studio, they won't let you do that. But DON'T CHANGE THE SCREENPLAY! DON'T CHANGE THE SCREENPLAY! DON'T CHANGE IT, DON'T TOUCH IT! DON'T TOUCH IT! IT'S GOOD. IT'S GREAT, IT'S GREAT—BRILLIANT!" It was just terrific to work with him because he has a creativity. He gave me his comments on the screenplay, on the anthropological aspect and the whole invention of the language. Then I became ambitious. I called Sandy and said "Sandy, it was so good to work with Anthony Burgess, why don't we think about Desmond Morris to help me with the body language and all those attitudes" and he said "Greet". So I sent my screenplay to Desmond Morris and had the same kind of response. That to me was the most pleasant and exciting period of the entire film.

So did Desmond Morris actually work with the actors?

With the actors and with Anthony Burgess. They all came to London. We hired a bunch of mime actors and we sat at a desk and said "Okay, this is the word 'give', for example. Anthony had a few words—we worked together, and Desmond Morris had a few gestures. Anthony said I propose "Gis", and that was not really terrific, so we said okay, "Doh". Desmond would say "Today when we say 'give' we do this" (indicating a hand gesture). Ape also do this, but with more tension. "Dr we could do it this way, or this, the Italian way, or also some apes do this" (indicating more hand gestures). Or we could do it the African way (slapping back of right hand on palm of left)—ok, this is it. Next word is "water". It could be "aque" or "ege". Would they say "arg" as we would, or ere they still at the stage of development where they would go "ugh, ugh, ugh" (similar to the noise an ape makes)? When they're thirsty would they go "ugh, ugh" or put their hands to their mouths in a cupping gesture. And so on for four hundred words.

Left: Everett McGill as Naoh contemplates new mysteries. Left inset: Ika displays extreme agitation. Below: Director Jean-Jacques Annaud gives instructions to the cast in a film that certainly isn't your average monster movie.





Above: An internecine fracas between Ulan tribesmen. Below: Jean-Jacques Annaud directs with an extreme understanding of cinematic style. Bottom: Producer John Kemeny confers with actor Ron Perlman during a break in shooting.



The interesting thing is that all the gestures we are using, most of them are not gestures that we use as such today but all of them are gestures we understand because ours are derived from those attitudes. For instance, if I'm doing this to her (touching Press Officer Sue Blackmore's thigh with the back of his hand) you understand what I'm doing—I'm just reassuring myself, or just feeling good being next to her. The fact that I'm doing it this way, you don't know why, but for some strange reason it rings a bell. The reason is that all apes have a sensitivity in the back of the hand. This is from Desmond Morris. At the end of the film they would use the palm of the hand because they're more human, but the transition between the two takes an hour and a half, because this is what it means. The eye contact is something we worked on tremendously. At the beginning nobody looks or stares at each other. At the end they do. They look at each other, they share. You can't actually look at a dog. You can stare a dog out quite easily.

Yes. He gets disturbed. Eye contact is something which is human. Like reading feelings through the face is typically human. Even the big apes would prefer to look at the position of the tail to see if the other is furious or happy or what. You can realise how long it took, because the dictionary that we published was very thick. All the actors had to learn it by heart and be able to improvise this way. Did the actors have any difficulties learning the language? No. I picked people with good body co-ordination. That was the key. Those actors that I picked clicked into it very, very easily, and were able to interpret their emotions through those attitudes. An intelligent person with good co-ordination, if you explain that for instance pride would be showing how big you are (pushing his chest out), which is very much an ape thing, they would know what you mean, because today, Margaret Thatcher or General de Gaulle would do much the same thing. It's exactly the same thing. It's a little nuance that makes a terrific difference. But at the same time, those people could

get into it very easily. Fury they would express like this (beating a cushion with the back of his hand). Those people I picked felt it was very close to them. You know, most gestures are cultural. If you go to the basics—if you wash off the surface, the coating of civilisation, you would find yourself with very, very strange reactions. You would want to bite, or bang. If you said to yourself, "How would I behave if I was born in the forest, if I didn't walk erect, if I had been raised by wolves. How do they behave?" And you would realise that you would get furious immediately anything went wrong. You could jab with your fist, but that is totally contemporary. What you should do is beat with the back of your fist. The natural thing is to use the fist as a weapon and you would use the back because this is the strongest part. If you are told to do that, then you translate immediately very easily. Those actors were terrific, plus they had six months training.

They must have had to get into great physical shape because it's obvious that they play very demanding roles physically. What sort of training did they go into?

We had six months training for the main characters and I had them every month here in London for a week and they would go back to Scotland or Manchester or America, and the first session was to explain to them what was primitive life. Then I gave them lectures and showed them a few documentaries about primitive tribes living today. I wanted them to know a few things because it was easy for me. I lived in Africa for such a long time. I did some of those documentaries so I know about tribal life, I've lived in villages so it's very clear to me. But I know people who have never seen savages in their life, so they don't know what it is to be primitive. I'll give you an anecdote. The first casting session I had was in London with a very talented English actor from the Royal Shakespeare Company. I remember my casting director was not on the right track. This man sat down and he said to me very politely "I understand perfectly well what it is to be a savage AAAAAARRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" And I said "Omigod! Not at all. To be primitive is to save energy."

Ron Perlman plays Amoukar, the supporting male lead. I found his performance extraordinary however, it's likely, because of the nature of the film that he won't receive the recognition due to him. In Los Angeles I saw people who were very impressed with him. You are right. What he did was so absolutely amazing—so perfect. Back to the training. I showed them over and over again two films that Twentieth Century-Fox bought, and one of them was called *The Feast*, a documentary shot in 1965 in Venezuela. It was so primitive I thought to myself "Oh, I'm never going to get them to that point." I fact I did. Another film was called *Dead Birds* shot in New Guinea. And also I screened for them all the Jane Goodall films about chimpanzee behaviour. That was the first session, to make them understand. Then they started getting fit, running barefoot in New York—with shoes without soles, to get some callouses. Next time they came, they went to the zoo, and I explained to them that as the film was showing the emergence of man and man becoming erect I would take them back to apes and it would be very easy then to go back to man. It's of course a very Darwinist approach. So they were chimping around, so to speak, for a week, and then they did the chimp back in their houses. After that it was very easy to put them right. Just before they were totally right I stopped them. This was when Desmond Morris and Anthony Burgess came. Then for the next four months they were training in basic behaviour. How difficult was it to keep the make-up consistent throughout shooting? It was very difficult because each actor had several make-up appliances on at the same time. Each make-up took four hours to apply and two hours to take off. Each piece had to be destroyed because you could only use them once. Each piece took five hours to make. It was a nightmare. The make-up budget was three or four million dollars. We had an enormous limit.

Christopher Tucker was in charge of the unit but how



many people did he have working with him?

About thirty people. We did the research with him, and the concept was developed with him and the texture, and after that he was manufacturing the pieces and had another unit to apply them, under his supervision. He just went casually to the shooting, he was basically in charge of the making of the pieces of the conception of the whole thing. It took us a year, taking polaroids and finding the right faces. The casting sessions were incredible as you can imagine. You had makeup on the animals as well. It must have been quite difficult to make up an Indian elephant to look like a woolly mammoth.

For the elephants and the tigers, what we had to do first was to get the right concept, which was very difficult and try it on a real elephant. I did casting sessions for elephants—I know all the elephants in England, personally! With Garth Thomas (Associate Producer) we spent days and days with blankets to test whether or not they would rub it off. We had to find calm ones. He went to Ireland. I went to the Welsh parts. I went to Bristol and Manchester to find them. Jimmy Chipperfield co-ordinated the whole thing. Then after that we tried to make up one. It was fine and then one day I received a beautiful telex in Los Angeles from Garth Thomas. "We have entirely mastered the situation, elephant looks great. We have a mammoth". I flew back to London and they took me to Liverpool, I think, to a circus. And they said "you'll see two elephants". They said they had one in one tent and one in another and they were perfectly happy. So I waited for five hours till they were finally ready and they opened the first tent. There was a magnificent mammoth! Very calm, very happy, very proud to be a mammoth. They opened the second tent. There was another mammoth—very calm, very proud to be a mammoth. Then the two elephants looked at each other and say "Who is that?!" And they were totally scared, ran away, destroyed the tent. One was so frightened that he started eating his make-up. The precious horse tail and yak hair. That was a disaster. The elephants were quite happy in the make-up because it was warm and comfortable even on their faces but they were frightened of the others. Then we had to face another problem when they discovered they had tusks. Normally in a circus they have their tusks cut and suddenly they had tusks again and they wanted to play and fight. Every day there were two or three pairs broken. We would have to go back to the Natural History Museum and take new moulds and manufacture more tusks. That was one of the major problems we had to face with the elephants. After that, when we were in Scotland they went the wrong way and ended up in the marshes. They were cold and they wanted to go back to their tent so they took a short cut. It was like a prehistoric scene. The Mammoths in the bog with all those people around. In prehistory they would kill them. Now they were trying to pull them out.

I think one of the great strengths of the film is that the landscapes that you've used, which I'm sure took a long time to find, make it apparent that there is no fakery. You know that the mammoth is a made up elephant, and the same with the lions but the effect is almost one of a time machine because it captures an immediacy. In many ways the film has the look of a documentary.

The locations took us a year to find. Very early on with Gerard Brach we said we wanted to shoot an adventure film, a love story, a romantic story, as we would shoot a documentary. The whole technique that I used was very much that of documentary filming—long lenses, hand held camera, practically no lighting—sometimes a few reflectors, sometimes a Brute, but mostly not. We tried to find the right location with the right lighting. We felt that that was the taste we wanted and it appeared to be essential for us. I'm very pleased that you said that because that is exactly what we intended. We did a little page to present the film. Gerard wrote it and it said at the end "and we will shoot this adventure as if a camera could have recorded it 80,000 years ago".

One of the things I found interesting was that you have various tribes in it at different stages of evolution. Is this feasible?

Yes, it is feasible. It is a point on which there is no



Top: Executive producer Michael Gruskoff watches the filming. Below: Ika amazes the Ulan tribe with her skills in fire making. Bottom: A tribesman has been mauled by a bear, his comrades stand guard.



controversy at all. Human evolution is not like a man's dream. Even if you take today, you have aborigines in Australia, Pygmies in Africa, Eskimos, and Japanese living in skyscrapers with computerized elevators. Today we are all homo sapiens. At that time there were Neanderthals who were structurally different and homo sapiens. They were different species, like tigers and lions. They don't look alike. I insist on that point. Today we are all homo sapiens, Neanderthal disappeared. Scientists are happy on that point. They are happy that a film shows that evolution is not like one single thing. You've got all kinds of attitudes. Just think about this. When Captain Cook discovered Tasmania in 1820. They didn't know how to make fire and they had only three different tools when here in this country we had machines and steam engines. There is a fantastic documentary called "The Lost Tasmanian". Wide audiences ignore this, they think that a single period everybody is the same. Today we are not the same. One century ago, think about the difference between the Welsh and the Italians, the differences in culture. Or a man living in London and a

man living in Ghana. Plus it's a fact that during 70,000 years Neanderthal and homo sapiens were living on the same territories. For instance, in France we've got some caves with beautiful paintings, a homo sapiens cave. Next door, about a mile away there is a Neanderthal cave with some tools, no paintings, different skulls. In fact that's why I picked that period, so I could have this confrontation between two different species, two very strong cultures. It also reflects a situation we have today. I was so impressed when I went to Africa to see that people could have a culture that was so different to what I knew. I thought there was only one culture—mine. Such a mistake! You've got an extremely successful film. What are you going to do next? I don't know. I didn't want to make a decision before the film opened. I didn't know where I would stand. You don't foresee a *Quest For Fire Part 2*? No. I would be totally unable to do that. It's not my style.



WILLIAM CASTLE

Part IV

Feature by Arthur Ellis

"An audience doesn't know what they want to see, but they know what they don't want to see."

When William Castle died of a heart attack in 1977 his prime was long since gone, although he didn't actually stop working for any major length of time. He was active in television and preparing his own theatrical projects. At the time of his death he was working on a script from Paul Brodeur's novel, *Stuntman*, with Frederick Wiseman intended as director. This was to be made two years later by Richard Rush.

In '73 Castle was interviewed, along with several other such film makers, for a book titled *King Of the B's*. In the interview it is ironic to note that one of the questions implied that he was already a man out of his time. "Who were you making your films

for?", at a time when he was still making them couldn't have done much for the confidence, and confidence, it seems, wasn't what Castle now had much of anyway.

The audiences had drastically changed. Without too much understatement it is reasonable to say that they didn't want to be merely titillated, they quite simply wanted the real thing.

Castle saw his audience as those from the 9-16 year old bracket, although certain of his films were rated for those beyond that age group. He regarded his films as inoffensive fun and nothing more than that and he couldn't understand why young people were sometimes barred from seeing them when he remembered the exhilarating affect that watching Lugosi sink his teeth in night after night in the stage version of *Dracula* had on him as a very young man.

But in the late 60s and early 70s the audiences were being attracted to mass carnage and the graphic depiction of violence, along with the drug and and

dropout movies which plugged any gaps in the theater schedules. An awareness by the youth culture surfaced which demanded, and mostly got, movies that in some way stimulated them mentally in ways that led to a further understanding of themselves. The movie with a message.

Fright Breaks, Percepto and Emergo weren't what the public wanted, *Easy Rider*, *Zabriskie Point* and *Woodstock* were. But it wasn't just a hard time for Castle alone, the whole horror field became fallow, as did the comedy genre.

The arrival of *The Exorcist* in 1974 unleashed an unhealthy yardstick by which amounts of putrefying bile and unrelenting scenes of horror could be measured for future films. The essence of what Castle was all about, a fun dampened by sweating palms, was irretrievably lost behind this quagmire of offal.

A sense of relish had been supplanted by one of nausea.

In '75 Castle finished work on his last





Above and left: The title stars of William Castle's *Bug* go into action. The film's director was Jeanot Szwarc, who started in tv and later directed *Jaws* II.

completed film as producer, *Bug*. A rather tv orientated effort, due in every way to director Jeanot Szwarc's *Night Gallery*, *Ironside*, etc, background. In a repeat of his *Macabre* insurance policy ploy Castle insured his star bug "Hercules" for 1,000,000 and took it and himself on a month long nationwide tour of the states to promote the film. It was a throwback to the old days and, when travelling and meeting up with theatre managers and members of the public he was clearly in his element and it was something he dearly loved doing.

The film itself was hampered greatly by the fact that the fear and revulsion of such an accessible common or garden insect, one which most people had come into contact with at some time, was totally lost by enlarging their size to immense proportions, thus the audiences crucial frame of reference was thrown away and detachment set in.

The photographic effects, which included getting 14 inch, bright red cockroaches to fly were handled by one of the cameramen on *The Hellstrom Chronicle*, Ken Middleham. The climax of the film sees an endless flow of airborne roaches—with 24" wing spans—pouring frenetically out of a crack in the earth. Middleham sprinkled phosphorescent powder over a number of flies and achieved the desired flight effect with careful lighting, aided in that the sequence was to take place during the hours of darkness.

A new gimmick of installing floor mounted windscreen wipers that brushed softly over the audiences feet and ankles during the big bug moments was dropped, but Castle didn't worry about it particularly. He knew that, "... the real things would crawl across the audiences' legs as no cost anyway."

Bug was a success. Not a *Jaws*, but a film which made a comfortable profit.

Since William Castle's death there really hasn't been any one producer to match his stamina and basic cheek. At certain times throughout his career he was overshadowed by Roger Corman, who himself started off as an independent about the same time. The difference between the two perhaps lies in the area of ego. Castle needed the raised eyebrows and again throughout his career played up to the King Of The Gimmicks tag. Mean—while Corman just churned them out, remaining away from the public eye.

Much of Castle's best work, including *The Tingle* and *Homicidal*, is under wraps. According to Columbia Pictures there are no prints in existence in England, although both the above films turned up in the late 60s seasons of *The 'X' Film* on ITV. This might mean that ITV have their own prints but are perhaps unable to place them. Seeing as how they're black and white and carry 'X' certificates this cancels out the usual weekday afternoon slot reserved for black and white movies.

Nowadays the promotion of a movie is radio and tv ads and the obligatory album tie-in, overseen by impersonal, figure-efficient executives. All well and good perhaps if a film makes money but cinema, or at least a part of what I define it as, means showmanship, personalised showmanship.

The nearest equivalent to a Castle type producer working today is, dare I say it, Mel Brooks. Different genres maybe but they have (had) the same belief in what they're selling. Today producer's don't make movies they make "product", and the clinical connotations that this contemptible word evokes are reflected in the "product" they manufacture. Castle certainly exploited his films for all that they were worth, but the great difference between his films and those made by the bulk of his successors is that his are worth a hell of a lot more.

RICHARD P. RUBINSTEIN ROMERO

Part Two: The 3-D Connection.

Tony Crawley's interview with producer Richard P. Rubinstein details where George Romero is headed way into the '80s. From Day of the Living Dead (but, be warned, not The Return of The Living Dead) to a 3-D venture with Stephen King.

It's a school. Just outside of Pittsburgh. Plus a big gymnasium. Two buildings in ten acres of land. There's a big flagpole out front. And from it flutters two flags. Old Glory, the American flag, is on top. Underneath is a white banner emblazoned with the motif: Camp Laurel.

No, it's not the setting for *Friday The Umpteenth—Part Nix*. It's the film-making facility—not quite a studio—of George A. Romero in his home town.

The big gym, 120 x 120 ft, with a 60ft ceiling, has been converted and sound-proofed into a sound-stage. Hal Helbrook and Adrienne Barbeau (Mrs John Carpenter, no less) have been tolling there of late making *Creepshow*. George Romero and Stephen King's tribute to the EC comics of yore. And gone! (Yes, Tom Savini is around. I think it's because of Tom that there are the two flags on the big white pole. If George had left it bare, Tom would have almost certainly hung something extremely gruesome from it. He's probably working on it, all the same).

This then is the home front of Romero's full schedule for the '80s. *Creepshow* is the first of several planned collaborations with the fantasy world's best-selling novelist, Stephen King—it will be first unveiled during the Los Angeles Film Market in March.

And this is where Richard P. Rubinstein is whenever George is shooting. Otherwise, Rubinstein, Romero's producer and his business partner in their wide-ranging Laurel Entertainment (films, tv, music and publishing) company, is in the Big Apple offices on, but where else... Broadway.

He operates all his deals from there—including hunting down and signing up potential new talent among writers, directors, actors and special effects technicians for Laurel's extra plans for more than simple the one Romero movie a year. He then turns up in Pittsburgh when his production duties call. "I represent the clock ticking away for George," as he explained last month.

As Richard is George's deal-maker, he is the obvious person to talk to in order to (try to) plot Laurel's '80s plans into some kind of perspective. Thanks to Rubinstein, Laurel's president—Romero is no longer the Pittsburgh horror freak who got lucky. He is an increasingly important force in international movies and his current partnership with Stephen King has Hollywood puce with envy.

I first met Richard, with George, in Cannes during the 1977 festival. The Brooklynite who had been a Wells Street consultant, foreign sales agent for films, journalist and among the earliest video (shooting) buffs, looked then like some graduate from film, or indeed business administration school. Romero had

all the charisma, Rubinstein was merely his shadow.

Last year, he was a changed man (I hardly recognised him at lunch; I thought I was at the wrong table). He was still slim, but more loose somehow, in tee-shirt, denim and baseball cap. Still very much together, but more... not just successful, but Arrived somehow. Changed anyway. But then so has Romero and Laurel. They're all on the map now. The most successful independents in American movies and the world is their oyster...

Although you have offices in New York, and get flown out to the West Coast to talk turkey with the brothers Warners, Pittsburgh remains the physical and almost spiritual home of Laurel.

New York is the business office. Pittsburgh is the production office. Hollywood is penance. We do six days of penance here and there... No, I shouldn't! I have tremendous respect for the studio distribution system. It's a way to mint money. And I'm in films on a business level. That's my responsibility to George. Is that why you went public with Laurel the other year?

To get us a development fund, right. George and I went public, our shares were traded over the counter in the American Stock market. We sold out 40% of the company, keeping 60% to control it. But it did

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RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

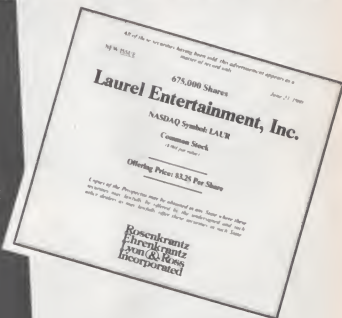
directed by
JOHN RUSSO
co-author of
"NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD"

written by
JOHN RUSSO
and
EDMONDO RAPHAEL



produced by
RUSSELL W. STREINER

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Left: Warning. This film is not quite what it sounds. If they make it without impinging on Romero's reputation, he's not worried, by George! If they go for a rip-off, it'll wind up in court. Chicago financier Tom Fox, however, is against heavey, explicit violence. "We wouldn't dream of putting in the kind of violence we're seeing in some of the junk in release. I want a film the networks can run." Above: Good buy. Here's a unique ed from Romero's Laurel combine — offering 40% of the company to the investor in the street. Too late now to snap the offer up, but Laurel is still trading of course, like IBM, Warner Bros., Bell Telephone to 2.5 million dollars to help develop Romero's future film plans. Say thank you to the kind ladies and gentlemen... (as if they're not onto a sure thing!)

UBINSTEIN ON ERO

give us a development fund, okay? So that we're able to control our own process, without having to take money from someone else, in order, say, to buy a book that we wanna make into a movie, or a screenplay. We have the money for that, we don't have to get it elsewhere. Then, when we're ready to ask the industry for money, we only have one question to ask: Do you want to make this picture with us or not? All the elements have been assembled that will allow someone to make that decision.

Why are you and George Romero in the business you're in?

Number 1, we love the genre! It's not a step to doing *The Turning Point*. We're not trying to work our way up by doing exploitation movies as a step to doing something else. We love what we do! And with, how shall I say, a lack of ego, if you will, we've proved we can do what we do better than anybody. I have to say it's nice that since *Zombie—Down of the Dead* came out three years ago, all of a sudden we've become venerable. We're respected. "Hey, you guys are right at the head of the trend," they tell us.

That's ludicrous! The only reason we made *Zombie—Down of the Dead* was that George was ready to make it. We spent five years resisting being

categorised as a horror director since *Night of the Living Dead*, and the next five years were spent putting together the deal. That's why it happened. *I suppose some investors were more interested in guesstimating when the horror cycle would peter out?* Oh sure, people are always saying: Isn't the audience going to be over-saturated? No! These kind of pictures have been with us for 50 years. It's only because they've become more visible and Newsweek writes up "Hollywood's Scary Summer" that people are taking notice. But drive-ins in the United States have had scary summers for a very, very long time. *Whatever happened to the third and final part of George's zombie trilogy, Day of the Dead...?* That will happen when we're ready to make it! We have a contract to do it before 1985. We have an option for doing it sooner, but we have to start production no later than the beginning of 1985. We're just pretty flexible about it.

Meanwhile something is happening called Return of the Living Dead by John Russo, who was...

... George's co-author on *Night of the Living Dead*, yeah. He's written his script with Edmondo Raphael, and he's making it with producer Russell W. Streiner.

And it looks hyped as being the third.

Don't they ell? Let me say this... We, or George said to John Russo and Streiner, who was also involved in *Night of the Living Dead*: "You go your way, we'll go ours. Do whatever you want to do."

Well, they sure have but it tends to look like George's way. Aren't you wary of such blatant rip-offs?

We have no objections to them making a picture called *Return of the Living Dead*. None whatsoever.

It's a rather fine line... We have a strong objection if anyone believes this is the third picture of George's zombie trilogy.

Right, back to reel Romero projects. Creepshow, as you told us last time (see last issue), is being backed by United Artists Theatre Circuit (UATC), which just so happens to be knee-deep and hype high into a startling, new 3-D process called StereoSpace. Does two-and-two make four... or five?

We'll probably make a 3-D picture. UATC has a twin 70mm process that is... extraordinary! You used to have all those complaints about getting headaches at 3-D films, with the glasses and everything. It had nothing to do with the glasses, but the resolution and brightness of the picture. Your eyes, subconsciously, were being strained. We've seen the new process and are very excited by it. The amount of detail in the twin 70mm process is fantastic! And the window, if you will, how far things will come out at you if now... 18 inches in front of your eyes! Whatever it is coming out of the screen appears to be extending as far as over the head of the person sitting in front of you. *I get the impression Steve King is writing scripts faster than George can shoot them. So, an obvious question: Why not shoot Creepshow in 3-D?* That's what UATC said...

I thought they might!

While we—you—sit back awaiting the next one, two, three horror movies from George, we've been seeing plenty of others. Have you found any worth the watching?

I think Rob Bottin's effects in *The Howling* are extraordinary. I just go in to see the last twenty minutes of his effects... without waiting for the first



CRAZIES



From George A. Romero's *Dead Alive*
to *The Thing* (see page 104)

hour and a half to get to them. I liked *Scanners*. It was tight. A good piece of entertainment.

Another director to have shot up as fast as George is ... John Carpenter, yeah. I still happen to like *Dark Star* the best of all his pictures. I liked *Halloween*, but *The Fog* didn't do much for me. I can't imagine any monster knocking on the door before coming in!

There seems to be some effinity between John and George—he has two of *The Fog* stars in *Creepshow*, for example—Hal Holbrook and the dishy Mrs C Adrienne Barbeau.

And there was a character called George Romero in *Escape From New York*. We have a lot of respect for John's work.

Have they ever met up yet?

John and George have had for the first time, last year, a chance to meet and talk a little bit. Now in the States, there's been a lot of TV shows they've been on together. Particularly last Halloween when Rona Barrett introduced John and George together.

There's been some good shows. George and Steve did *The Dick Cavett Show* in two parts—with Patra Straub who wrote *Ghost Story*, and Ira Levin, the author of *Rosemary's Baby*. That session was as masterly as hell.

Tragically those tv shows don't get sold. We're stuck with Johnny Carson in Britain now—but no sign of Dick Cavett. And he really gets into things. I saw his great two-parter with Katharine Hepburn five years ago.

Pity they don't travel. George really got off. He got loose, you know. Cavett says, "Well, listen guys, I'm sure everyone's wondering, did you have a warped childhood that made you like you are?" He's good, Cavett. Very well prepared.

Yes I know, unlike the first time I met up with George—and didn't know who the hell he was! Oh, you still remember? But even then you asked him to wait a couple days until you prepared up on him. Back to John and George. Did they get on? More like minds like Steve and George?

Oh yeah. They had a couple of hours to talk.

Remember how the babysitters were watching *The*

Thing in Halloween? In *Halloween II*, it's later the same night ... and *Night of the Living Dead* is now playing!

Some night!

There's a certain amount of incestuousness. If you read Peter's *Ghost Story* book, a guy goes into a theatre and ... *Night of the Living Dead* is playing again!

So, you're close without sharing the same town, or state. George is in Pittsburgh, Steve's in Maine, John's in LA, and you're mostly in New York. Unlike the *Lucasburgers* and *Coppologists* in California, you're all scattered about.

And I tell you, we've been having a good time. As well as being serious about what we're doing. Maintaining control and having the authority to go with the result, in management terms, is really what we're about.

And still highly independent. Apart from *Salem's Lot*, do you, or George, ever get other Hollywood offers? We turn 'em down ... We get regular offers from the studios. For the right situation, we'll be the first people on the plane.

I have to say that we made *Zombie—Dawn of the Dead* with Dario Argento—no one showed up to interfa. Dario came once, okay? He looked at his watch. He said '45 minutes—four sat-ups!! And he went back to Italy. Impressed. That was it, okay. We made *Knightreaders* and the distributors didn't bother us.

You had a terrific deal with UATC on that film, didn't you?

Oh yeah. It's now one of the most successful independent features ever made. Richard C. Hassanein, of United Film Distribution Co, which is a subsidiary of UATC, agreed to distribute *Zombie—Dawn of the Dead* un-cut and un-rated. None of the major companies would agree to that. The film did just as well abroad in Italy, Japan, Germany and the UK. To date, I'd say the worldwide box-office gross is

in excess of 55 million dollars.

No wonder you're sticking with UATC. How did you get on, though, with United Artists itself, a major company, and as we have to keep on reminding ourselves nothing to do with UATC.

When we made *Knightreaders*, again the distributors didn't bother us. They didn't come around at all. In fact, George was a little insulted that no one showed up! He said, "Hey guys you ought to come down here and see this wonderful set before we finish shooting ...". United Artists had the film for abroad and in fact, Norbert Auerbach, the day he became head of United Artists, came to Pittsburgh to see us. They announced his new position on Friday, and on Monday morning he was in Pittsburgh with us, looking at rushes. And he said, "Before I was President of United Artists, I used to go to Paris, Rome and London, all over the place. Now I'm President, I go to Pittsburgh." But that's been a very, very pleasant relationship within the foreign market for us.

Well, so it ought to be. You kind of guys are turning out better movies, and making them more money than the studios with turkeys like *Heaven's Gate*. Can we close by summing up? And putting the Laurel Entertainment projects for the first decade of the '80s into shooting order.

We're doing *Creepshow* now. Beyond that, we've not made any specific commitments. *The Stand* will happen when it's ready. *Day of the Dead* must, contractually begin by the start of 1985. I've no idea as yet when the 3-D film will fit in. We have a project we're involved in with Luigi and Aurallio de Laurentis. And George is writing a novel, and it will be some point in time in the future that that novel will eventually make a picture. Everything will be done ... as the time comes.

When there's
no more room
in HELL
the dead will walk
the EARTH

GEORGE A.
ROMERO'S

ZOMBIES

DAWN OF THE DEAD

Next month: *The Savini Connection*. As a special postscript to this two-part interview about the world of George Romero, Richard Rubinstein assists Tony Crawley in a profile of Romero's effects men: Tom Savini.

THE NEXT ONE



Preview by Tony Crawley

After completing John Carpenter's *Escape From New York* and before reporting for duty in George Romero's *Creepshow*, the luscious Adrienne Barbeau took off for the Greek isles. Not to get a little colour back in her cheeks. Not exactly. She was working. Making another kind of fantasy movie. What else would you expect from John Carpenter's wife?

The new project is *The Next One*... and shrouded in secrecy. Until now.

The film is described as being "a unique and deeply moving tale of science fiction." I'd have rather more faith in such hype if the movie had *not* been written and directed by Nico Mastorakis. He's the Greek film-maker who perpetrated that awful Jackie Bisset-as-Jacki Onassis rubbish a couple of years ago: *The Greek Tycoon*.

And indeed, he only lately decided against a further stab at filming the obviously splendidous tapestry of the Onassis life style. (His target was to be Christina this time).

Instead of that top people's soap-opera, and no doubt concerned with making his name in the United States (rather than in Greek law courts), Mastorakis turned to fantasy. And by all accounts, he has not done too badly, either. Certainly, his main casting is intriguing. He matches Barbeau with Keir Dullea. (Well, he's not always as good as he was in *2001*).

They meet, this American widow and baffling stranger, on a small Aegean island. He's washed ashore one morning. Unconscious. With the aid of her young son (Jeremy Licht), she pulls him in... takes him home. She has the local boozehound of a doctor look him over. The result? Shock after shock...

The stranger has amnesia, par for the course with mysterious movie strangers. He has a series of numbers tattooed on his back. He can, as young Tim later spies, makes the



see *boil*. He can also – and Tim is the proof, this time – bring the dead back to life. And then, quite suddenly, he can launch into pure Greek, as if to the lingo born.

These and various other special, not to say downright super powers keep coming up. Indeed, they multiply. Daily.

At his first, preliminary examination, however, the doctor finds enough to send him scurrying back inside a bottle for safety. The stranger has two hearts. (If Doc had stuck around for the rest of the surprises, he'd be blotto for the rest of the movie).

Adrienne calls her new-found friend Glenn. Again with Tim's help (adoration in his case), she strives to bring about Glenn's full recovery. And, with luck, his memory. In truth, he's barely troubled in that area. As to be seen in the library, he has a photographic memory. He doesn't even need to open a book to absorb all its contents.

Rather enjoying the Flo Nightingale bit (they say otherwise, but women *love* having a fella to fuss around), Adrienne buys him some clothes. She takes him for walks to the village, in case the surroundings might jog his mind a bit. All it does do is arouse the not inconsiderable ire of big Yanni. He's rather partial to the brunette, himself, and doesn't go for competition. Therefore, he easily convinces himself and others that Glenn is the child-killer lately escaped at sea while *en route* to a date with a man on the mainland. The executioner.

What – Glenn, a killer? Rubbish! He's such a warm, gentle, real Keir Dullea kind of a guy. No wonder Adrienne is falling for him. Tim, too, in his way.

And it's the kid who gets to know Glenn best. Dumbounded, he is, with his new pal. What with the sea boiling thick. Plus a lot of other show-off dematerialisation stuff on the beach. With Adrienne, the guy is more concerned with piecing together his identity. He's drawn, for example, like a magnet to the village church and develops an insatiable interest in learning more about the Christ

figure that the church and churchgoers are devoted to.

To unlock Glenn's head, Adrienne really goes to work on him. She gets him into bed. And later feeds him some dope. It sure works . . . Stoned out of his tattooed tree, Glenn rambles on and on . . . He's from the future, he says. From another dimension of time. Everyone looks the same back there. The sole distinguishing mark is their I.D. numbers. Stamped on their backs.

Pretty much stoned herself (pretty anyway), the widow is convinced the poor man is tripping more on weed than time.

The truth begins to dawn on the doctor, however. Particularly after the incident of Tim's death . . . In a trance, Glenn had "seen" the kid tumble from a high cliff-top. He finds Tim dead and then, quit simply, and without much fuss, brings him back to life. Snap! Just like that.

The villagers don't believe it. Obviously the doc's diagnosis was up the spout as usual due to his alcoholic haze. But Doc knows that he was, for once, sober. That Tim was kaput. That this Glenn guy really did resuscitate him. Somehow . . .

He warns Glenn to move on. Quit the island. And fast. Once the people realise his miraculous powers, his life won't be worth living. They'll turn him into a freak-show. In time, they'll probably turn on him, too.

Doc knows, you see. Well, he'd had to be dumb (or drunk) not to. All this Lazarus stuff is happening on . . . Good Friday.

Glenn stays put. He's quickly trapped, in fact, in another of Yanni's devious plots to get rid of him. This one results in the drowning, not of Glenn, but of three youngsters in his boat. Yanni swears blind the accident was the stranger's fault and Glenn is jailed until a court hearing. But no cell can hold a man who can make the sea boil and the dead walk. He escapes both prison and island.

With Tim in faithful tow, Glenn heads for the beach where he says a boat is hidden. There is no boat. Merely, the denouement.

Far from stoned this time, Glenn explains all. He had been following his brother through the time barrier from his dimension. He made a bad turning or calculation and splashed down, as it were, about two thousand years too late. Shall we say 1982 years late . . . ?

His brother, so he discovered here, was crucified.

"It's impossible for me to stay here," he goes on. "To try and change the imperfection of the people would alter the natural evolution of history leading to the future. I cannot return to my own time, either. Therefore, I must . . . self-destruct!"

The news has Tim in tears. He's told not to worry. The next one is coming, the next one? Yeah, and the next one will look exactly like me, says Glenn. Only you will know the difference . . . (Unless Mum memorised Glenn's number).

With that, Glenn strolls into the briney, boils it up a bit, and vanishes in a frothy, firey farewell.

Adrienne and her kid change islands anything to get away from Yanni. Tim spends most of his days on the beaches with his dog. Searching. Waiting. His vigil is finally rewarded one dawn. A man is washed ashore. Unconscious. With a series of numbers tattooed on his back. Tim rolls the body over. It's Glenn. Well, it sure looks like Keir Dullea again.

The next one has arrived . . .

And if the film has been as good as I'm told it is up to this point, I suppose the thing to do is see it over again. And again. *Ad infinitum* ●

The next one

Keir Dullea (as Glenn), Adrienne Barbeau (Andrea Johnson), Jeremy Licht (Tim) and Peter Hobbs. Written and directed by Nic Matorakis. Photographed by Ari Stavrou. Designed by Paul Aclari. Produced by Constantine Vlachakis.

An Allstar Production (USA). Technicolor. Dolby stereo.



MICHAEL REEVES

Profile by Anthony R. Platten

Born in 1944 of American stock, Michael Leith Reeves obtained his education at Radley School in England. Due to his intense interest in the cinema he became a leading figure in the industry during the 1960's. His style brought a new and fresher approach to the flagging British horror film of the late 1950's/early 60's, which was slowly becoming dominated by the Hammer stable.

His first break was given to him by his idol Don Siegel, who gave him a job of dialogue director on film tests he was doing. After Reeves had returned to England a long-time friend Paul Maslansky invited him to Italy to help with some scripts on a horror film called *Castle of the Living Dead* (*Il Castello dei Morti Viventi*). Made in 1964 (although not released in England until 1968) the story, set in Central Europe 1820, tells of a troupe of strolling players who are invited to give a performance at the castle of Count Drago, who has a

passion for taxidermy. During the film four of the six players are disposed of by Drago and his sinister manservant Sandro. In the finale the two surviving players struggle with Count Drago who is then pierced by a scalpel which has been dipped in his own mummifying poison. A standard 'gothic horror' with Christopher Lee giving a distinguished presence as Count Drago, and a short appearance of Donald Sutherland as a police surgeon. Produced by Maslansky, directed by Herbert Wise (Luciano Ricci), there has always been some confusion as to how much Reeves contributed to the film. Although his name was never included in the credits it was understood that he worked with the second unit and also made some additions to the script. This low-budget film could never be hailed as a classic although in its own way certainly a collector's item to the genre.

Michael Reeves decided to stay in Italy after Paul Maslansky offered him a story called *Vardella*, for which he was asked to direct with a budget of around £12,500. Reeves was so keen on the idea that he added a sum of his own money, re-wrote the script under the pseudonym of Michael Byron, and the film to emerge was *Revenge of the Blood Beast*. Filmed in 1965 at a break-neck speed of eighteen days it starred that well-known lady to the Italian horror Barbara Steele as the witch Vardella and Ian Ogilvy (who later went on to appear in Reeves' next two films) as her young husband. Some nice touches of gruesome horror with maggots crawling out of eyeballs, people being hacked to death etc. With this film Reeves was showing promise as a director.

In 1966 he returned to England and after several attempts started production on his second film as director called *The Sorcerers*. The film concerns an old couple, Dr. Marcus Monsarrat (Boris Karloff) and his wife Estelle (Catherine Lacey), who have long-distance hypnotic powers over a teenager Mike (Ian Ogilvy). They become his controllers and he their puppet, making him commit murders and general havoc. The film ends with young Mike's car crashing and bursting into flames, killing the boy and, at the same time, his controllers burn to death in their flat. The film was not favoured by many of the critics at the time of release in 1967, but it did make money. Reeves at this time was only twenty-three and it was due to the success of *The Sorcerers* that he was given his largest budget to date, to direct and script his third, and final, picture.

1968 saw the release of *Witchfinder General*. Based on the true-life activities of a lawyer from Ipswich, Matthew Hopkins (played with great relish by Vincent Price), who introduces a new and bloody terror to England during the 17th Century. Hopkin's rampage is finally brought to a halt after a young soldier Richard (Ian Ogilvy) bring him down with several blows of an axe.

Not for a long time has a film aroused such an outcry about nastiness and gratuitous violence. Which is surprising, because out of the film's 87 minutes only two scenes, in effect, linger on violence—the opening and—the end. Apparently Reeves had trouble in preventing Vincent Price from playing in his usual tongue-in-cheek manner, so much so that Price re-dubbed parts of his dialogue after the film's completion.

Sadly, this was to be the last film for Michael Reeves. He had planned to direct Vincent Price in his next film *The Oblong Box*, but before this materialised Reeves died of an overdose of barbiturates in 1969. He was only twenty-five.

Through his three films as director it showed that he was a film-maker the British camera needed so very badly ●

Opposite: A portrait of director Michael Reeves on location during the filming of *Witchfinder General*. Inset: Ian Ogilvy as he appeared in Reeves' *The Sorcerers*.

it's only a movie

Hanging is too good for them. They should be made to watch non-stop Pearl & Dean adverts for the next 20 years.

The 'they' I'm referring to are the rotten sods who broke into my flat recently and stole the video recorder, along with a large number of video cassettes. I won't mention what was on the cassettes but needless to say it's a considerable personal loss...

According to the police there are several gangs operating who concentrate purely on video recorders—for obvious reasons. The recorders are easy to carry away, unlike TV sets; are in great demand and are also hard to trace. The ideal target for a thief, in fact. So if you have one take steps to protect it. Chain it to the wall or disguise it as something else. Above all, make sure it's insured.

It could have been worse. I mean they didn't take any of my Ian Fleming first editions or my back issues of *Starburst*. They didn't even take *one* of the 12,860 unsold copies of *Skyship* that are scattered around the room (no taste, these criminal types). However I did unload a copy onto the finger-print expert who showed an interest in the *Skyship* poster. "Is this a new movie?" he asked. I modestly

explained that it wasn't a movie but a novel—a *marvellous* novel—by yours truly and that if he'd like to read it I could probably rustle up a copy.

He accepted it gratefully. "Is it being made into a film?" he asked.

"Any day now," I replied. "As soon as someone buys the rights."

He looked at the cover. "I haven't seen this anywhere around," he said. I nodded sombrely, thinking if it would be worth having him put that down in writing. I've said the same thing to my publishers on numerous occasions but actually hearing it from the *police* might make them take notice.

This column sends its heartiest congratulations to Albert R. 'Cubby' Broccoli for receiving the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award at this year's Oscar ceremony. The Award honours 'creative producers whose bodies of work reflect a consistently high quality of motion picture production'. Now it's true that Cubby and I have had our differences in the past, and in fact are still *having* differences, but I mean it sincerely when I say it's about time that the man mainly responsible for the most successful film series in history has finally got some official recognition for his

achievement. Even though I think the recent Bonds have been pretty blah, and that the casting of Roger Moore as Bond was a terrible decision, I have to admit that it's due to Broccoli's skill in giving the audiences what they want that has kept the Bond series going for two whole decades.

Not bad for someone who used to be a tea boy at the 20th Century-Fox studios in Hollywood. That was in the 1930s but by the time World War 2 came along Broccoli had worked his way up to Assistant Director. He joined the Navy for the duration and after the war came to London and set up a film company, with fellow American Irving Allen, called Warwick Films. The films they produced during the 1950s tended to be action-adventure vehicles for fading stars like Alan Ladd and Victor Mature and were more American in style than British. Titles include *The Red Beret*, *Hell Below Zero*, *The Black Knight* (all starring Ladd), *Zarak*, *Interpol*, *Safari* and *The Long Haul* (all starring Mature). The most interesting thing about these films is that many of the people who worked on them went on to become the core of the Bond production team—like director Terence Young, writer Richard Maibaum and set designer Ken Adam.



starring John Brosnan

Though Broccoli had tried to persuade Columbia Pictures to buy the rights to the Bond novels as far back as 1957 (they declined) another producer ended up beating him to the punch when he tried again in 1960. The other producer was, of course, Harry Saltzman and the two of them were obliged to enter into an uneasy alliance in order to get the project off the ground (Broccoli's ex-partner, Irving Allen, returned to the States where he later set up a series of rival secret agent movies—the awful Matt Helm series starring Dean Martin).

Saltzman pulled out of the Bond business in 1975 leaving Broccoli in sole charge—which is probably what he wanted from the very beginning (as Saltzman once said of their 'partnership': "We fight with the distributors, we fight with the agents, and we fight with each other. We're real professionals."). Unlike Saltzman, who was involved with many different film projects during the years he was co-producing the Bonds, Broccoli has stuck purely with Bond since the series began. According to Broccoli this is because United Artists have wanted him to concentrate on the Bonds alone but now that MGM have taken over UA he thinks the situation will change and he will be allowed to

make other types of movies. If so it will be interesting to see what kind of project he chooses...

Amusingly, Broccoli was once approached by the Russians to make a movie in Russia. It was about to be none other than John Reed, the American journalist who wrote 'Ten Days That Shook the World'. Since then Warren Beatty has made his own version—a little film called **Reds**. I think Broccoli's version would have been much more interesting. I can just see Roger Moore in the Warren Beatty role, cheering on the Russian revolution in his Savile Row suit. (Hmmm, I wonder if Broccoli would like to make **Skyship**...?).

Someone who seems to have been around in the film industry as long as Broccoli is Harold Baim. He's been making appallingly boring travelogues and featurettes for as long as I can remember. Just when I think he's retired or reformed up pops one of his films again. My latest encounter with one of the Baron of Boredom's bone-breaking productions took place when I went to see **Mad Max 2** again at the Warner cinema in London's Leicester Square. It was a 25 minute film about Portsmouth and the only unusual thing about it was that the

narration was by Telly Savalas (are things *that* bad these days Telly?). Not one shot of Savalas actually *in* Portsmouth, of course, even though the narration tries to give the impression he's right there behind the camera and having a 'real ball' in fun-filled Portsmouth.

Every old travelogue cliché is exhumed and conveyed to the comatose audience via Telly's distinctive diction. One of the lowest points occurred during a sequence where Telly has just told us he's a sucker for old castles—after various shots of old castles we suddenly get a shot of an ordinary-looking building in the middle of town. But the mystery is soon cleared up. "The Portsmouth Polytechnic," explains Telly, "A castle of learning..." Arghhh.

The absolute bottom was reached in a sequence inside the Portsmouth library. The camera does an endless pan along rows of books. Why? Well, they are all books written by authors who happened to be 'residents' of Portsmouth at one time or another. Presumably all they had to do was change trains there just once to earn that status.

But I guess that's what they mean by 'library footage'...

Sorry!



book world

The main publishing event this month is the much-heralded appearance of *Helliconia Spring* by Brian Aldiss (Cape, £6.95). Aldiss is probably the most eminent contemporary British sf writer, Arthur C. Clarke notwithstanding. Over the years he has produced an impressive body of literate and imaginative science fiction as well as non-sf novels, such as *A Soldier Erect*, which have enabled him to reach a wider audience. His recent work has been mostly on the borderlines of science fiction, but *Helliconia Spring* is a full-blooded sf novel of epic proportions.

Helliconia is a planet orbiting a somewhat dim sun which is in turn in orbit about a much hotter and brighter sun. For most of its two-thousand-year cycle, Helliconia is in the grip of an ice age, but as the planet and its parent sun move closer to the hotter sun a rapid thaw and a spring flowering occur on the planet as a prelude to a fiercely hot summer which will ultimately give way to the decline into a long winter again. This first book of a trilogy (the second two volumes to be called *Helliconia Summer* and *Helliconia Winter*) follows the progress of the human inhabitants of the planet as they emerge from the ice age and civilization begins to flourish again with the greening of the planet.

In a recent interview on the arts programme *Omnibus*, Aldiss explained that he had consulted experts on astronomy, geology, biology and so on when constructing the Helliconian system so that it would have a plausible scientific basis. This kind of world-building is increasingly common in science fiction these days, and personally I'm suspicious of it since it often leads to the Larry Niven Syndrome whereby the reader is given a conducted tour of a world with no real dramatic interplay in the narrative and is simply expected to be egot at the thrill and wonder of the scenery. Aldiss is aware of this danger, stressing in his somewhat cautious dedicatory note the necessity for telling a story about people with whom the reader can identify.

The story opens with Helliconia still in the grip of its ice age, during which the human colonists have lost much of the civilization they once possessed. Yuli is a young hunter whose father is captured by the intelligent native Helliconian species, the phagors. He moves into a city where he becomes a novice priest and eventually gets a glimpse of the world of the Takers, a secret elite hiding underground who may still possess much of the old knowledge that has been lost by the majority. It's clear that this section is an allegory of the human race's progress towards civilization on Earth, with hunters becoming city dwellers, developing religion and eventually science. This introductory section closes with Yuli leaving the city and going off into the wilderness to develop his own settlement.

The rest of the book follows the progress of Yuli's descendants as the ice retreats from the land with the coming of spring. The great climatic changes bring new plants and animals and a renewed threat from the phagors, who are determined to attack the settlement of Oldorado to revenge themselves for the death of an ancestor there. Meanwhile, orbiting above Helliconia is Earth Observation Station Avernus, manned by people from Earth who watch and study the changes taking place on the planet. They are not allowed to interfere with events on Helliconia, and in any case would contract a fatal disease if they set foot on the planet. Their observations are beamed back to Earth where they are shown in great amphitheatres so that the people there can follow the flowering of civilization on Helliconia. But Earth is a thousand light-years away, so that by the time the broadcasts are shown they are already part of Helliconia's past. This is an added reminder that the book is symbolic of a view of human



history on Earth.

Novels involving large themes and casts of characters often flounder because the reader views everything from afar and cannot identify with individual characters. Aldiss has avoided this problem by concentrating on several people in a particular settlement and using their activities to mirror the great changes taking place on a planet-wide scale. The narrative is leisurely-paced, always well-written and never less than interesting. Yet I had the feeling that Aldiss was not totally engaged in his story, since there are relatively few of the really evocative and memorable passages which we find in his best work. The book has the air of having been planned as a "big" book aimed at a wide audience, a suspicion that was reinforced by a certain repetitiveness in the narrative, as if Aldiss felt that some of his less attentive readers might need regular reminders of what has gone before; or as if he himself had forgotten earlier passages he had written. It's always difficult to assess the first book of a trilogy, since succeeding volumes often amplify and clarify earlier material. But while I certainly look forward with interest to the next two books about Helliconia, I was left with the uneasy feeling that Aldiss had written this book with half an eye on the market at all times. It reads as if it was written not because he felt compelled to write it but because he felt he ought to.

Another big book, in all senses of the word, is *The Many-Coloured Land* by Julian May (Pan, £1.75). Book One in the *Sage of the Exiles*. This, too, has been heavily promoted and comes with a front cover blurb which says: "... will eventually rival *The Lord of the*



Rings and *The Foundation Trilogy*." My heart tends to sink when books are compared to *The Lord of the Rings* since it usually means that there's going to be a lot of elves and trolls scampering around, taking in fake Old English and being so cute and quaint that they make me want to start up a Stamp Out Little People Society. However, *The Many-Coloured Land* is not a sub-Tolkien farrago but is pure science fiction. In fact it's science fiction with everything but the kitchen sink thrown in.

Here's some of the ingredients: time-travel, aliens, proto-humans, interstellar travel, mutations, psychic powers, mind-en enslavement and a quest for the ultimate weapon. Stir them all up and what do you get? You get a Professor Gudenan inventing a form of one-way time-travel in a twenty-first century when the human race has colonized other planets and encountered alien races. Since objects and people can only be sent into the past, with no hope of returning, the time-travel device is used only by those people who are unhappy in the twenty-first century. They are sent back to Western Europe in the Pliocene era, six million years ago, when the Earth was unspoiled and inhabited by the ramapithecus predecessor of homo sapiens. Each voluntary exile is given a short course in survival techniques and is provided with a few tools of the twentieth century which will help him establish himself in the distant world of the past.

But the time-travellers arrive to find that all is not well in the Garden of Eden. A race of humanoid aliens have crashed there, having voyaged to Earth to use

STOP PRESS: Sed to report the untimely death of Philip K. Dick, one of science fiction's guiding lights. Dick died at the beginning of March, apparently of a heart attack. He was in his fifties and still had many potentially fruitful writing years ahead of him. A writer of complex but always humane science fiction, he will be greatly missed

chris charles



female ramapithecus to propagate their kind because their own females have been suffering from infertility. However, the arrival of the time-travellers has provided them with more suitable females, and the exile population has been enslaved by the use of grey torques which, when put around people's necks, compel them to do the alien's bidding. But the exiles rebel, enlisting the aid of a mutated branch of the aliens who can create terrifying illusions. One of the group also recovers a spear-like weapon of great power, and in the climactic scene they attack and overwhelm an alien settlement. The sequel promises a continuation of the war to free the whole of the exile population from their thralldom.

The novel reads like an Edgar Rice Burroughs story written by Robert Heinlein or Poul Anderson. It's all wide canvas stuff and I didn't believe a word of it. On a line-by-line basis it's written efficiently enough, but I had some difficulty in engaging with the story at the beginning since every one of the first ten chapters introduces a new character. These characters are designed to flesh out the backgrounds of the main cast, but I just got confused and kept wishing the author would get on with the story. When the story does start, it's suitably full of intrigue and incident, but I couldn't help wondering why twenty-first century characters (some of whom were born on other planets) all talked in 1960s Americanese. This sort of detail becomes more than a minor irritation when characters start saying things like: "Quit or I'll fevkin' well zap you." Even more surprising is the alien king who at one point announces: "I'd sooner

try to plug a lava dike with my royal swizzle stick." Apart from finding it hard to believe that an alien king would use this sort of vernacular, I also think that this pronunciation is rather lacking in royal dignity.

In principle I have nothing against good old-fashioned adventure stories which capitalize on the special sense of wonder which the best science fiction evokes. But what's disturbing about *The Many-Coloured Land* is how manufactured a book it is. It's easy to imagine the author thinking: "Right, I'll sit down and write a science fiction blockbuster, putting in every kind of idea I can think of." It's like making a cocktail by pouring shots of every spirit you can find into a glass: the result is likely to take your breath away, make you feel giddy and leave you with a thick head, vowing you'll never touch the stuff again. At least, that's how I felt. The most interesting books are the ones which the reader feels have been written because the idea or story really grabbed the writer's imagination. *The Many-Coloured Land* was too contrived a book to ever give me that feeling.

Penguin has just released two novels which were first published in 1966, *Make Room! Make Room!* by Harry Harrison and *Night of Light* by Philip José Farmer (£1.50 and £1.25 respectively). *Make Room! Make Room!* formed the basis of (I'm reluctant to say "inspired") the film *Soylent Green*. Its theme is overpopulation and it uses the traditional science fiction technique of extrapolation, postulating a New York City containing thirty-five million inhabitants at the turn of the century in which food is scarce and the overcrowded population are forced to consume such an awful synthetic diet that they'd doubtless drool

over a pork sausage as much as we would over a T-bone steak. This is one of Harry Harrison's more serious novels, having a hunt for a killer as the main narrative thread which allows the author to show us a good deal of his pretty unpleasant future world along the way.

Night of Light takes us on to a nightmarish planet where a person's unconscious fears or desires can literally be made flesh. Carmody, its central character, is interesting in that he is a psychopath who has previously murdered his wife without remorse. Farmer has always been an imaginative writer who has too often tended to throw away his best ideas in hasty writing. This novel is one of the better examples of his earlier work.

Although both *Make Room! Make Room!* and *Night of Light* are above average sf novels for their time, I can't help feeling that the regular reprinting of titles by a select group of authors (usually American) tends to limit the number of new books which can be published, especially when books by British writers such as Richard Cowper and Christopher Priest have experienced difficulties in negotiating paperback editions of their latest novels; and if these writers are having such problems, what of the young writers who may be striving to get into print for the first time? Harry Harrison and Philip José Farmer's books do, of course, sell well, and I'm not suggesting that publishers should drop them in favour of unknowns. But unless more effort is made to cultivate home-grown talent we may eventually end up with a market which is completely dominated by writers who are, when all is said and done, foreigners.

TV ZONE

Having just taken over the reins from tv expert Tise Vahimagi, I had better explain what directions I hope the column will take in the coming months. I plan to keep you posted on the latest developments on Channel 4, due to begin screening in November. Rumour has it that the programme planners for the new channel have been buying up some old British and American tv shows. In the pipeline are three old comedy series from the States, *Get Smart*, first shown in 1967, *Car 54*... *Where Are You?* 1961-63, and *My World and Welcome To It*, 1970. From this side of the Atlantic there has been talk of re-showing the colour episodes from *The Avengers* starring Diana Rigg and Linda Thorson.

Whilst we're on the subject of small screen memories, this is perhaps a good point at which to look back at a long forgotten aspect of television, the merchandising. Now that so many people own a video recorder future television programmes should certainly be in no immediate danger of disappearing without trace and although old shows themselves are being resurrected for audiences, some of the merchandising they spawned is sadly forgotten.

With the exception of technical manuals or sociological studies, publications about television are still few and far between. Occasionally, however, a rare tribute has appeared in print and at the close of the fifties, the Chilton Company of Philadelphia produced a superb book by Daniel Blum entitled *The Pictorial History of Television Programmes*. Although concentrating solely on American tv, it does include photos from such stalwarts of the British tube as *Robin Hood* 1955-58 which starred Richard Greene in the title role and Patricia Driscoll as Maid Marion. (Incidentally does anyone remember Miss Driscoll as a presenter in the early BBC *Watch With Mother* series?) The book is now out of course long out of print.

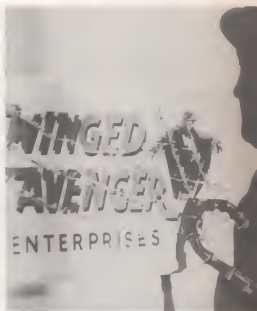
A little more recently, 1974 to be exact, Marshall Cavendish published a book called *Do You Remember: Television*. Guilty of a few errors, it still makes interesting reading as does the 1971 paperback about fifties television *The Glorious Decade*.

Unfortunately, both titles have now been discontinued.

Over the years, collectors have been able to buy up soundtracks from some of their favourite tv shows and apart from the BBC's own record label, other companies that have recorded tv material at one time or another include Warner Brothers Records, who in 1973 produced an album of dialogue from the *Kung Fu* series starring David Carradine. *Doctor Who* was also a likely programme for disc, although with the exception of some later story records for children, the only really rare recording is one that features the Daleks which appeared on a Century 21 mini-record in 1966. Apart from a reorchestrated version of the *Doctor Who* theme tune, the record features highlights from one of the classic William Hartnell stories, when the Daleks, after chasing the TARDIS and its occupants through space and time, come face to face with the Mechanoids, gigantic robot spheres of the planet Mechanus. *Century 21 Records* in fact, produced a whole range of mini-records containing stories and music from most of Gerry Anderson's tv shows including *Fireball XL5*, *Stingray*, and *Thunderbirds*.

All of Anderson's tv series have appeared in weekly comic strips and some were part of one of Britain's most popular magazine set-ups in the sixties. *TV21*, which after beginning its life on the 23rd January 1965, carried stories from *Burke's Law* starring Gene Barry, *Fireball XL5*, *My Favourite Martini*, *Stingray*, *Supercar*, *Lady Penelope* and the *Daleks*. Anderson later launched *Lady Penelope* in her own comic, which although was aimed specifically at the girls featured picture stories from *The Beverly Hillsbillies*, *Bewitched* and *The Girl from UNCLE*. The last magazine to promote the supermarination series, *Joe 90*, appeared in 1968 and contained a strip cartoon version of Irwin Allen's *Land of the Giants*.

Special magazines that were produced to promote a television series are also considered to be collector's items and cover a wide variety of titles. The BBC in 1973 for example, published a ten year tribute to *Doctor Who*, which was packed with photographs and information. Back in the



BY RICHARD HOLLISS



early sixties, World Distributors who were running a successful series of paperbacks entitled *Star Specials*, produced an excellent souvenir to the Honor Blackman *Avenger* series.

Novelisations written to tie-in with television have always proved popular and although the stories themselves may have been weak in comparison to the series they complemented, their cover photos usually made up for this. Irwin Allen's *The Time Tunnel*, *Lost In Space* and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* have all cropped up in paperback at some time during the sixties. *Star Trek*, of course, has emerged in every kind of merchandising known to man. Pan books published stories from the tv series *Till Death Us Do Part* in 1967, and World Distributors produced a Consul paperback in 1963 featuring *The Avengers* with Honor Blackman. Hodder and Panther Books carried on the tradition with a further six *Avenger* novels featuring Diana Rigg. It was also Consul Books who in 1965 published two of the John Drake *Danger Man* stories, and with the vast selection of *Doctor Who* paperbacks now available in Target Books, who can still remember the original *Doctor Who* story published in 1964 by Armada.

During the fifties, sixties and early seventies the Western Publishing and Lithographing Company of America printed an incredible selection of comic spin-offs for KK Publications from the heyday of television called Gold Key Comics. Their format may not have been in anyway controversial, but for photos reproduced on the covers they make excellent collectors items. Amongst the hundreds of tv shows represented were *The Rifleman* with Chuck Connors, *The Munsters*, *My Favourite Martini*, *The Avengers*, *The Flintstones*, *Gunsmoke*, *Tarzan's TV Adventures* with Ron Ely, *The Invaders*, *The Time Tunnel*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Ben Casey* starring Vince Edwards and *Checkmate* which starred Anthony George, Doug McClure and Sebastian Cabot.

Another popular souvenir from old tv shows has always been the plastic model kit. Aurora Hobby Kits of America designed some highly detailed models including a dioramas,

one-eyed monster, Chariot and Robinson family from *Lost In Space*, the Robinson Robot with a swivel top from the same show, the Flying Sub and Seaview from *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, the flying saucer from *The Invaders* and the spacecraft from *Land of the Giants*. Other kits included characters and spaceships from *Star Trek* and superheroes like the Green Hornet and Batman. Various companies were responsible for kits from *Fireball XL5*, *Stingray*, *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet*, *Space 1999* and *The Six Million Dollar Man*. Real collectors items are the spacecraft models manufactured in the fifties from the *Disneyland* Television Space *Specials*, supervised by Wernher Von Braun.

Here in Britain in the early sixties, Marx Toys produced a BBC Dalek with blue flashing lights and, as it was described on the box lid, "amazing robot action." The merchandising that surrounded *Doctor Who* and particularly the Daleks was staggering and included Dalek games, puzzles, cutta-mastic sets (Daleks could be cut from polystyrene sheets using a battery operated device with a heated element) and from Plastoid Ltd, some rather unusual gold on black badges featuring characters such as the Zarbi, Menoptra and, of course, the Daleks. Some ice cream companies, especially Lyons Maid, produced badges from the Gerry Anderson shows including *Fireball XL5*. It was also possible to join the United Network Command for Law and Enforcement (UNCLE) and not only would you receive an official membership card, but a large black badge carrying either the number 2 or number 11. *Prisoner* fans please take note, they were not the first.

Of a more contemporary vein, paperbacks and television specials have been published from programmes such as *Space 1999*, *The Outer Limits*, *Coronation Street*, *Dad's Army*, *A Family At War* and even *Crossroads*. Episodes of *The Champions*, *The Avengers* and *The Sweeney* have all cropped up on 8mm home movies. In fact, the list is endless and, as I would like to return to this subject at some future date, I would appreciate any information on the subject that *Starburst* readers can give me ●



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WITCHFINDER GENERAL

Feature by Arthur Ellis

From the film's sequence, depicting the hanging of a supposed witch amid the shattered tranquility of an English rural landscape, it was blatantly obvious that Michael Reeves' 1968 minor classic *Witchfinder General* hadn't come from the normal purveyors of British horror fair, The House of Hammer.

For one thing *Witchfinder General* had more blood, a lot more blood, and at the time of its release a high body count went down well with an audience, even though the prop

blood used was perhaps the phoniest thing in the movie.

But the film also had its own, very individual style. It was unique in terms of visuals linked alongside an imaginative and evocative soundtrack. Unlike many horror type pictures of the day, *Witchfinder General* was a location film and the story took Joe Public to far more places than it had been to before, as opposed to, say, being cooped up in Frankenstein's laboratory set for 90 minutes watching the inevitable unravel.

The tale relates to Richard Marshall's pursuit of Matthew Hopkins (soon to be appointed Witchfinder General by Parliament), about the time of the battle of Naseby, during the Royalist wars in the mid 1640s. Superstition is rife throughout the country and Hopkins and associate "pricker" Stern ("I get the confessions you know, not Matthew," he quips to Marshall at one point) roam East Anglia, preying on the fears of simple minded villagefolk.

Having been summoned to Brandeston, ►

Lawyer Hopkins tortures, drowns (and then strings up for good measure) Marshall's future father-in-law, a priest, whom Hopkins, under payment from aforementioned villagefolk, has accused of being an idolater, which promptly becomes the word of the film.

Sara, Marshall's wife-to-be, is the priest's daughter, and as such is humiliated, raped and degraded accordingly. When Marshall discovers what has been going on, he marries Sara in the sacked and graffitied chapel and, almost in the same breath, pledges to hunt Matthew Hopkins down and kill him.

Although *Witchfinder General* might at times seem a little hampered by its reasonably meagre budget—11 Roundheads can be counted waiting for the battle of Naseby to begin—this hardly matters, as the plot whisks us all over East Anglia and other parts of the country at a moment's notice. It's a measure of Reeve's skill that only rarely do you ever question the settings and events taking place on screen in relation to what was actually spent on dressing them up.

All budgetary considerations are however forgotten for the most part, when Richard Marshall gets on with his vengeance, reigning his steed through the woodlands of Suffolk.

At times the film beautifully fuses romance with unrelenting sadism (for 1968) as meted out by Hopkins and Stern, and later by Marshall himself.

Through the film there are constant transitions from scenes of relative quietude to ones of horror and despair, and vice versa. The opening for example sees us enjoying a few sheep grazing while listening to the echoed hammering of a gibbet's assembly and then, a sudden cut takes us right into the frenzied villagers, dragging the accused witch to her death.

On numerous occasions we're either led into or taken out of a scene via a very painful scream of a blazing flame. The crackling of twigs and the agonised wailings of Hopkins' victims are stunningly counterpointed by Paul Ferris' highly moving score which is one of the main reasons the film is so vividly recalled. The music injects a depth of character and understanding where before there may have been very little. This isn't to slight Reeve's achievement, but merely to argue for a better appreciation of Ferris' contribution, one which seems to have gone largely ignored.

An example of his great work is during the scene where Marshall and Sara make love. The scene, shot mostly from either overhead or assorted low angles was, for its day, somewhat explicit, at least for a horror film. The two are seen naked from the waist up, writhing with pleasure in Sara's double bed (!). Certain "acts" are hinted at and in tandem with the growth of stubble around Marshall's chin, the scene could easily have turned into a very lusty trimming for the film's violent content.

The emotive theme that Ferris uses over this scene not only allows the more animal images of Marshall to come across (he's been away at war for a while), but also tempers the lust with a high degree of concern, tenderness and feeling.

What's become of Paul Ferris I'm none too sure, but you may at some point encounter his *Witchfinder General* melody on a number of commercials, including one for peanuts and another for ice cream. (The main theme itself is reminiscent of Greensleeves. A similar moment from Ferris's score can be located on the *Lord Jim* soundtrack, composed by Bronislau Kaper, and written a few years earlier.)

Romance is further found during Marshall's sweeping gallops through the





countryside, where the love theme is brought into play to help create moods of energy and weariness.

Having vowed to kill Hopkins, Marshall fortuitously bumps into Stern, in one of a number of excellently atmospheric tavern scenes. After a well-staged fight Stern escapes and Marshall gives chase across country at great speed.

While still being persuaded, Stern meets up with Hopkins, returning from another bit of business, and, hiding in a thick wood, they both watch as Marshall charges by.

Arrogant in the extreme, and with good reason—the law is on his side—Hopkins dismisses Marshall's revenge threat as flippantly as if despatching another innocent accused of devilish practices, indeed, if the worst comes to the worst Marshall himself can always be accused similarly.

Both Vincent Price and Robert Russell as Stern, put everything they've got into defining primal lusts and greeds. In the film there is never any attempt to supply any reasoning or motivation, beyond those of self-preservation and avaricious gluttony. Money, sex and sadism, along with a rather (sadly) underdeveloped sense of cruel voyeurism is what they're all about.

Vincent Price has never, to my mind, been more thoroughly enjoyable in such a scintillatingly evil and insipid role, delivering each line as though it were written for his eyebrows to casually dismiss. Russell is solid support all the way and at times outdoing Price for villainy, but of a different, loutish sort.

Hopkins, as portrayed by Price, has a certain aristocratic aloofness towards underling Stern, and he allows this general attitude to detach himself from accepting the fact that he's simply butchering for profit. Or if he thinks otherwise, he keeps it under wraps.

Marshall has given Sara money enough for her to secure lodgings in Lavenham, which happens to be where Hopkins turns up next, on a further outing of exorcism, this time by fire.

Hearing of Hopkins presence in the immediate vicinity of his recent bride, Marshall and a group of Roundhead cronies—including one of several let-down performances in the film from Marshall's smug and chummy sidekick Nicky Henson—wheel their mounts in the direction of Lavenham.

Alert to both Marshall and Sara's grudge against him, Hopkins decides that prevention is better than cure, and with the aid of the impish and devil-like town clerk, the loving couple are taken to the local castle, under "suspicion" of being devil worshippers.

Here, Sara is subjected to several harrowing ordeals, including a needle through the back of the kidney, while Marshall watches on, seething with hate and repeating his earlier commitment of, "I'm going to kill you," to Hopkins' sardonic face.

Meanwhile, Henson and accompanying Roundheads are led to the castle after enquiring where their comrade is. Breaking their way in (past sentry Alf Joint, stunt co-ordinator on the film) they discover Marshall axeing Hopkins over and over again, while Stern wriggles upon the floor, having had an eye dislodged by one of Marshall's spurs.

By the time of their arrival Hopkins is merely a collection of breathing fillets, and revolted by his friend's sanguine fervour Henson puts Hopkins out of his misery with a

Vincent Price, who plays Matthew Hopkins in Witchfinder General, grins expansively for the camera. Hopkins actually existed and the story of the film is based on the slender truths surrounding his catalogue of misery, achieved mainly between 1643 and 1647.



bullet in the head. Marshall looks up at Henson, poised over Hopkin's body, eyes glowing and screaming over and over again, "You took him away from me, you took him from me!"

The film ends with a freeze on Sara, who is still alive and neurotic, lying face down and spreadeagled upon a slab. Her screams echo through the castle and the end credits begin to roll, with the music again counterpointing the horrors with a reprise of the love theme, which then merges into a reminder of all the

tortures and killings with a burst of menace at the very end.

There is no doubt that the protagonists are left without hope of redemption, which was an unusual move at that time. Normally, in horror films of the period, it was customary for everything to be burnt to the ground. The hero either lived or died.

Witchfinder General has been released on video, but in the cinema version, which is cut. Prints are also available for hire, on 16mm and 35mm.

Richard Marshall (Ian Ogilvy) and Sara (Hilary Dwyer), pledge their love in the despoiled chapel. And in one of the most moving scenes in the film, Marshall goes on to vow to avenge the rape of Sara and the execution of her father, who was wrongly accused of witchcraft.



Witchfinder General (1968)

Vincent Price (*as Matthew Hopkins*), Robert Russell (*Stern*), Ian Ogilvy (*Richard Marshall*), Hilary Dyer (*Sarah*), Patrick Wymark (*Cromwell*), Wilfred Brambell (*Master Loach*), Tony Selby (*villager*), with Rupert Davies and Nicky Henson.

Directed by **Michael Reeves**. Screenplay by **Michael Reeves** and **Tom Baker**. Cinematography by **John Coquillan**. Produced by **Arnold L. Miller**.

Censor Cuts

Double reel 2: Substantially reduce the spiking of Lowes (Sara's Father) in the back, and reduce his screams.

Remove the *whole* episode of a woman being hit and half strangled in a cell: there should be no shot of her at all.

Double reel 3: Reduce the ducking of the parson (Sara's Father) and the two women (who went under with him).

Reduce to a minimum the burning of Elizabeth Clark (Hopkin's Lavenham episode) including shots of her being dragged to the gibbet. (In some prints these shots were left in): there should only be a distant shot of her in the flames.

Double reel 5: Reduce the episode of Sara being tortured with a spike and screaming. Substantially reduce the shots of Richard chopping up Matthew with an axe.

The Censor at the time was John Trevelyan.

The author would like to thank Quentin Falk and The British Board of Film Censors for their help in the preparatory stages of this article.

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